ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT IN TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTEES

by

Heidi Lenore Brocious

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of
The University of Utah
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

College of Social Work

The University of Utah

August 2013

The University of Utah Graduate School

STATEMENT OF DISSERTATION APPROVAL

The dissertation of Heidi Lenore Brocious

been approved by the following supervisory committee members:

Caren Frost	, Chair	5/10/2013 Date Approved
L. Hank Liese	, Member	5/10/2103 Date Approved
Mary Jane Taylor	, Member	 Date Approved
Lindsay Gezinski	, Member	5/10/2013 Date Approved
Jayashree Mohanty	, Member	5/10/2013 Date Approved

and by L. Hank Liese , Dean of

the College of Social Work

and by Charles A. Wight, Dean of The Graduate School.

ABSTRACT

Transnational adoption is a common practice in the United States, with American families adopting hundreds of thousands of children born in other countries over the last 50 years. Most of these adoptions represent transcultural and transracial adoptions, and both families and adoptees frequently engage in cultural and identity exploration activities, such as adoption camps, birth country travel, education classes, holiday celebrations, promoting friendships with other adoptees, and birth country language learning.

This dissertation sought to explore the impact that these different exploration strategies had on ethnic identity resolution of adoptees. Following a Multiple Article Path (MAP) format, this dissertation utilized data from three separate studies to explore this question. Chapter 2 incorporated mixed methods research with 22 adopted Chinese teens attending an adoption camp. Chapter 3 was a qualitative study with 10 adult adoptees from a variety of different birth countries exploring their perspectives on different identity exploration activities. Chapter 4 was a quantitative study of adult adoptees, looking for correlations between a resolved sense of ethnic identity and birth country travel, language learning, and friendship with other adoptees.

Key findings from these studies include (a) adoptees value adoption camp, and that friendships with other adoptees are important; (b) travel to one's birth country is important to many adoptees, and the meaning and value of travel can vary over time; and (c) birth country language learning is positively correlated with resolved ethnic identity.

To my daughter Molly, for being the best thing that ever happened to your dad and me.

I am with you now and always as you explore, have questions, and figure

out what being adopted, American, and Chinese means for you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Transnational adoption is a common practice in the United States. The U.S. Department of State (2010) noted that between the years of 1999 and 2010 families in the United States adopted 224,615 children born in other countries. Nearly all of these adoptions represent transcultural, transethnic placements; the majority of them are also transracial (McGinnis, Livingston Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009). Current adoption practice, supported by national and international policy (Hague Convention on the Protection of Children, 1993), involves teaching transnational adoptive parents about the importance of promoting their children's ethnic identity as it relates to his/her country of birth. This emphasis translates into large numbers of families seeking out activities such as culture camps, homeland tours, language classes, and ongoing contact with people from their child's birth culture to support their child's ethnic identity development. The purpose of this dissertation is to explore what activities and experiences are most helpful in promoting the development of a positive ethnic identity for transnational adoptees.

Transnational adoption has occurred for at least 60 years with large numbers of children adopted into the United States from Korea, Eastern Europe, China, Guatemala and Ethiopia, as well as other countries (U.S. Department of State, 2010). Advice for parents of transnational adoptees has changed significantly over the years; initially, parents were advised by adoption professionals to be colorblind in their parenting. This advice led parents to ignore their children's racial and cultural differences in favor of full assimilation (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Vonk & Massatti, 2008). In the 1960s and 1970s, discussions led primarily by American Indian and African American groups, concerned about transracial adoptees, began to change the discourse on the needs of adoptees in relation to identity development (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001). The

field of adoption social work now actively promotes and advocates for cultural connectedness, celebration, and acknowledgement of adoptees' birth cultures. A host of activities, including adoption camps, culture and language classes, family support groups and homeland tours have developed in response to this change of attitude, but questions remain about how useful these activities are from the perspective of adoptees (Baden, 2002;Bergquist, 2003; Huh & Reid, 2000; Mohanty, 2011; Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Volkman, 2005). A goal of this dissertation is to identify what activities, in what frequency and format, are most useful for adoptees to support their sense of ethnic identity and cultural belonging.

Ethnic Identity Development in Transnational Adoptees

As noted, professional recommendations and commonly accepted strategies for parenting transnationally adopted children have changed substantively since the 1940s when transnational adoption began in significant numbers. An article by Scroggs and Heitfield (2001) documents this transition:

> When adoption of children from overseas began to expand after WWII, social workers in the United States regularly counseled parents to assimilate the children into American culture. The children grew up in towns across America, often as one of the few minorities in their neighborhoods or schools. The early experiences of these internationally adopted children and the debate in the 1970s around White parents adopting Black and Native American children stimulated concerns about whether White parents could raise well-adjusted children of a different race or ethnic group. (pp. 3–4)

These discussions, along with research developments, led to a consensus about practice that is currently shared by most adoption professionals—that acknowledgement of a transnationally adopted child's birth culture is a right of an adoptee and an obligation of adoptive parents. This shift in thinking from assimilating adoptees (i.e., discarding all connections to their culture of birth) to recognizing and celebrating race and ethnic differences is also reflected in global policy. The Hague Convention on Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-country Adoption (hereafter referred to as The Hague) includes legal language acknowledging the right of adopted children to be connected to their birth culture (Bailey, 2006; Pfund, 1993–1994).

Informal research highlights a robust industry providing various adoption activities to families. A review of the Adoptive Families Magazine website indicates there are currently around 100 agencies providing international adoption services to families in the United States. Of these agencies, over 50 provide cross-cultural programming and 40 provide international adoptee support groups (http://www.adoptivefamilies.com/search/agencies.php retrieved on February 4, 2012).

There is limited formal information or data on the range of ethnic identity development services provided to adoptees and their families, the rates of participation in these activities, and/or their impact. Adoptive families looking for support and services are highly dependent on their adoption agencies and the internet for information and access to these types of programs. Common supports offered by agencies and used by families include the following.

Heritage, Culture, or Adoption Camps

Adoption camps can take on a variety of different foci, including learning about birth culture to talking about issues related to adoption, to a combination of the two. Most camps are offered during the summer months, and vary in length; some are sleep-over style camps, while others are day camps. They are offered to adoptees from school age until adulthood (Camps.Adoption.com, retrieved February 4, 2012).

Homeland Tours

Again, an informal Internet search reveals dozens of agencies and private companies providing coordinated and organized travel trips specific to adoption. There appears to be great variety in how these trips are offered; some are designed for school age adoptees and their families, while others are for adolescent adoptees traveling in supervised groups without their parents. Homeland tours most often include cultural tours of China, and sometimes return visits to each child's orphanage, foster parents, or "finding places" (the term used to describe the exact spots where children were left to be found by authorities).

Culture Classes and Activities

Many agencies and organizations offer weekly or monthly culture classes for adoptees that teach adoptees of all ages about various aspects of their birth countries. These classes focus on everything from food, to holidays and traditions, to learning small amounts of language.

Language Classes

Adoption agencies may provide some exposure to language as a part of the culture classes, and some offer more intensive language programs. Often though, parents seek out language resources through private lessons and/or school-based programs.

Family Groups and Online Support

Transnational adoptive families have often formed strong relationships with one another, and some families have formalized these relationships into organized community and online groups. One of the best known parent groups is Families with Children from China (FCC). FCC has over 175 active chapters in the United States, and its mission is to "provide a network of support for families who've adopted in China and to provide information to prospective parents" (FWCC.org, retrieved February 5, 2012). Other online support groups exist, and are generally specific to country of adoption, but have every configuration imaginable.

Embedded in each of these activities is the ability for adoptees and their families to connect with one another, as well as to establish relationships with members of the adoptee's birth culture. Often they include establishing relationships with teachers or mentors raised in a child's birth culture, which is also a commonly recommended experience to promote a child's birth culture identity.

Research Questions

Following the Multiple Article Pathway (MAP) process, each article in this dissertation will have its own specific research goal, guided by the overarching questions of this dissertation. Those overarching questions are:

1. What lifetime experiences and activities lead adoptees to feel resolved in their ethnic view of themselves?
2. What are the expectations and short term outcomes of teen participation in adoption camp? Does camp increase ethnic identity and self-esteem?
3. What role do friendships/sibling relationships with other transnational adoptees play in identity resolution?

Literature Review

Overall Adoptee Well-Being

Research on transnational adoption began in the 1970s, partly in response to the concerns raised around transracial adoption in general (Tuan, 2008). At this time, researchers began to ask how adoptees were doing in general:

- Was their psychological status affected?
- Did they have lower self-esteem?
- Did they have higher rates of mental health problems?
- Were there adaptive issues later in life?

While some studies have found higher rates of problems (Verhulst, 2008), most have found that "international transracial adoptees fared well according to various measures assessing positive adjustment (emotional well-being, school performance, behavior problems)" (Tuan, 2008, p. 1852). Similarly, research on self-esteem in transnational adoption has also looked for negative impacts, and found very little. In a 2007 meta-analysis about adoptees and self-esteem, the authors found that adoptees from all groups (transnational, domestic, and transracial) have self-esteem scores in the same range as nonadoptees, and concluded that low self-esteem is not a significant issue for adoptees (Juffer & Van Ijezendoorn, 2007).

After concluding that, in general, adoption itself was not a harmful intervention, transnational adoptive research has turned its attention in two directions: (a) looking at the characteristics, beliefs and behaviors of adoptive parents and/or (b) looking at race and ethnic

identity development in adoptees. This included looking a specific exploration activities like attendance at adoption camp, heritage language learning, and birth country travel, to name a few.

Parent Involvement in Ethnic Identity Promotion

Many of the more recent studies on transnational adoption have focused on parents' attitudes and behaviors toward their child's race and ethnic identity. Tuan (2008) noted that parental attitudes have changed significantly. She writes:

> Older cohorts were encouraged to deny differences and assimilate into their White families and communities. Younger cohorts, in contrast, have come of age in a very different social climate characterized by the availability of social and material resources such as parent support groups, adoptee play groups, Asian adoptee websites, heritage camps, motherland tours, and consumer items (e.g., 'culturally appropriate' books and dolls). (pp. 1854–1855)

Several studies have sought to quantify the current generation of parental involvement in culture and ethnic identity promotion. Rojewski (2005) surveyed 79 parents of children adopted from China about their involvement in cultural activities, as well as their attitudes about participation in these types of activities. He found that families reported mixed involvement, and that this was somewhat correlated to the age of the adopted child (e.g., becoming more involved in ethnic identity activities as their children got older). Johnston et al. (2007) found that White adoptive mothers of Asian children were more likely to engage their children in cultural socialization if they themselves had connections to Asian-Americans. In a qualitative study, Tan and Nakkula (2004) found that:

> Ten of the 11 parents in this study showed a strong interest in Chinese culture and made continuous efforts to learn about it. All of these parents, however, acknowledged that they were outsiders to Chinese culture and therefore found themselves in a vulnerable position in trying to instill it in their adopted children. (p. 74)

In another interesting finding based on parent self-report, Paulsen and Merighi (2009) found that parents of transnational adoptees who were involved in cultural activities felt that they had been better prepared for their adoption, and reported lower rates of medical, psychological and developmental difficulties in their adopted children.

Research With Adoptees

Research based on surveys of adoptees suggests at least some ethnic identity promoting activities are important in the lives of transnational adoptees. In 2009, the Evan B. Donaldson Institute on Adoption published a comprehensive report looking specifically at the needs of transnational adoptees (Adoption Institute, 2009). There were several findings in this report that were developed as a result of an exhaustive literature search, as well as a survey of over 200 adult Korean adoptees. One finding was that while most adult transnational adoptees reported an overall moderate to high level of comfort with their race/ethnicity, 34% of the adult respondents remained uncomfortable with their ethnic identity (McGinnis et al., 2009). Another important point made by this report was that according to adult adoptees "race/ethnicity is an increasingly significant aspect of identity for those adopted across color and culture" (p. 5).

The conclusions and recommendations of the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute report (McGinnis et al., 2009) are echoed in several other research articles published on transnational adoption in the last 15 years. A study in 2000 found that adoptee participation in cultural activities, along with open parental communication about adoption, were strongly associated with high self-reported ethnic identity, especially when the adoptees experienced racism in school settings (Huh & Reid, 2000). Other studies have found strong, positive correlations between parental support of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being (Yoon, 2004). From the findings of his study of 241 Korean adoptees ages 12 to18, Yoon (2004) concluded that the results of his data "suggest(s) that a negative sense of ethnic identity represents a vulnerability to psychosocial well-being" (p. 71).

In a qualitative study of adult adoptees who had returned to their birth country for a homeland tour, Berquist (2003) noted that the majority of participants reported having a sense of belonging and acceptance as a result of their travel experience. A 2006 study that surveyed 82 adult transnational adoptees also found a positive association between "cultural socialization and self-esteem which was mediated by a feeling of belongingness" (Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2007). A second, smaller qualitative study of five families who traveled back to China also

noted that all of the children who traveled felt the trip was important to their sense of identity (Ponte, Wang, & Fan, 2010).

While it appears no data exist that compare different strategies for promoting the development of ethnic identity, several methods are frequently noted in the literature. In the Adoption Institute report, the authors note that "positive racial/ethnic identity development is most effectively facilitated by 'lived' experiences such as travel to native country, attending racially diverse schools, and having role models of their own race/ethnicity" (2009, p. 6), and in fact they named their report "Beyond Culture Camp" highlighting their belief that some ethnic identity experiences may be more useful than others. In addition to these "lived experiences", parental encouragement of ethnic identity exploration, attending culture camps, taking language courses, participating in cultural celebrations, utilizing culturally focused reading materials are often (though not always) correlated positive ethnic identity development (Bergquist, 2003; Mohanty & Newhill, 2006; Rojewski, 2005; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tuan & Shiao, 2011; Yoon, 2004). One other study found, following the developmental framework described previously, that transnational adoptees cycle through a process from denial to emergent cultural consciousness, and that this process becomes more pronounced in the years immediately following the adoptees' move out of their parents' homes. This study goes on to note that the post-high school time frame, and the experiences and environments that the adoptees have during this time, can be crucial to the development of positive ethnic identity (Meier, 1999). Also of interest is the research conducted by Shiao and Tuan (2008) with transnational adoptees from a variety of age groups; in their work they found that there were significant differences between the adoptees' age and their level of exploration. In essence, what they reported was that older adoptees explored their ethnic identity less than younger adoptees, a finding that is in line with changing adoption practices and growing interest in ethnic identity promotion among the adoption community.

While there is general agreement in the literature that these ethnic identity promotion activities lead to positive outcomes for adoptees, there are also studies that suggested the impact of these activities may be more mixed or possibly limited (Baden, 2002; Mohantey,2011). One research study in particular highlights the complexity in trying to simply follow a list of prescriptive

activities to develop positive ethnic identity; in their 2005 study, Adam et al. looked at the attitudes of Chinese adoptees toward race when considering school diversity. Surprisingly, the study found that adoptees who were in more diverse school districts had lower opinions of Asian Americans than did those adoptees in schools that were largely made up of White students. The authors hypothesized that this might reflect a confounding of poverty and diversity in their study, speculating that the adoptees, most of who were of higher socio-economic status (SES), were more likely to affiliate with other children of the same SES status group. In schools with greater diversity adoptees are more likely to feel similar to Whites than to other Asians and to be more rejecting of this difference. In summarizing their study, the authors write "the results do not support the assumption that diversity at school encourages children adopted from China to associate socially desirable traits with being Chinese" (Adams, Tessler, & Gamache, 2005, p. 41). These contradictory findings indicate that there is much to be learned about the nuances of positive ethnic identity development for adoptees, despite the general evidence to support these activities.

Camp, Language, and Birth Country Travel, and Relationships as Specific Strategies

The majority of literature looking at ethnic identity exploration activities does not delineate what individual activities adoptees are participating in, making it difficult to parse out which of the activities (camp, culture classes, homeland tour etc.) or how much families have participated in. Additionally, most studies are focused on parental report of involvement, and are collected on families currently raising children, still making choices about what they will or won't do (i.e., a family of an 8-year-old may not yet have had a chance to learn language fluently or travel to their birth country). A few studies do describe some of the individual exploration activities that will be researched in this dissertation.

Adoption Camp

There are several challenges to researching the impact of adoption camp. First, camps can differ greatly in their content, and age of delivery. As previously described, a camp may

focus on school aged children or teens, may emphasis cultural learning, adoption in general, or fun and socialization. To date, very little has been written on the role and impact of adoption camp attendance. Only two studies appear to report findings specific to the camp experience. Randolph and Holzman (2010) conducted qualitative interviews with 5 adult adoptees and their parents about past camp experiences. They note that while the parents perceived camp to positively impact their child's ethnic identity, the adult adoptees reported that while camp was a fun experience, they felt that the short duration of camp meant that they had little or no long-term impact. The Evan B. Donaldson Institute (2009) reported that 56% of participants had attended culture camp at some point growing up, and that of these, 59% of these reported camps were "helpful." A comprehensive review of the literature found no other data on the implications of adoption camp on identity development.

Heritage Language Learning

Birth country language fluency is another area of transnational adoption research in need of focus. As previously noted, many studies have included language learning as a part of a larger set of activities being examined (Lee et al 2006; Prebin, 2008; Song & Lee, 2009) but few have teased out the impact of heritage language learning, or level of fluency, individually. The Evan B. Donaldson Institute (2009), in their survey of adult Korean adoptees, reports that 56% of adoptees studied their birth language, and of these, 59% felt this was helpful/very helpful in the formation of their identity. Manning (2001) observed adopted, school-aged youth attending an agency sponsored Chinese cultural school where learning Mandarin was a primary activity. Manning noted that the cultural school promoted "a same-race mentor relationship" (p. 26) and she concludes that "when children speak the language of their birth country they are embodying an important element of culture and enacting an important element of cultural identity" (p. 22). A recently developed tool, the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale (ERSTAS) asks specific questions about birth language learning and fluency (Mohanty, 2010), but, as this is a newer measure, there are not yet published data reporting on these specific aspects of cultural socialization. Heritage language learning has been examined in other

contexts, and the findings may be relevant to the transnational adoption community. In a qualitative study of nonadopted, mixed heritage individuals Shin (2009) found "heritage language may figure importantly into their understanding of who they are. Living at the intersection of two cultures, mixed heritage individuals are frequently subjected to marginalization in their respective heritage communities because of their dual ancestry" (p. 216). In discussing the same population, Shin (2010) goes on to recommend:

> This study emphasizes the importance of providing mixed-heritage children with a voluntary opportunity to participate in heritage-language education that is broad and intensive enough to enable them to fully develop a range of communicative repertoire in that language. This may involve not only HL learning in institutional settings but also trips to the HL parent's country of origin and sustained associations with HL-speaking peer and social network. (p. 216)

The role heritage language learning plays in identity development for transitional adoptions, and the similarities the adoption community may share with other mixed-heritage communities is also an area of needed study.

Birth Country Travel

Travel is the most frequently studied individual exploration activity. Again, the 2009 report by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute surveyed adult Korean adoptees on this issue. Sixty-two percent of the 179 adoptees surveyed reported they had traveled to their birth country, and of these, 74% felt travel had been helpful in forming their identity. Studies on travel have focused on different aspects of birth country travel including attending an in-country cultural immersion program (Prebin, 2008), expatriate adoptive families living in China (Heimsoth & Laser, 2008), to the more common 2-week birth country travel trip (Ponte, Wang, & Fan, 2010). Studies appear to generally conclude that birth country travel is a mixed experience for adoptees (Meier, 1999; Ponte, Wang & Fan 2010). Howell (2009) notes that birth country travel appears to be a more pressing concern for American adoptees, and notes that the Norwegian adoptees she interviewed often expressed little to no interest in visiting their country of birth. Publications about birth country travel are often more descriptive than evaluative (Ponte, Wang, & Fan, 2010; Sands, 2009), and are frequently more focused on the parental perspectives regarding travel, rather than adoptee views. In their 2010 article, Ponte et al. highlighted the discrepancies between parent

and child expectations of travel, and the role of "searching" for birth information plays into these expectations.

Important Relationships With Other Adoptees

The role of long-term relationships with other adoptees (friendships, siblings) have on ethnic identity development is virtually unexplored in the literature (Baden, 2011). Yoon (2004), in a study of Korean born adoptees, found that having a Korean sibling is associated with less distress, and also found that higher collective self-esteem scores were associated with diverse communities. Anecdotal evidence, such as the increasing development of family and adoptee groups and online communities, would suggest that transnational adoptees are seeking out relationships with other adoptees as a means of support, but this is not yet documented in the literature.

Supporting Theoretical Frameworks

At the heart of this dissertation are questions about how a person born into one cultural, racial and ethnic group then raised in another develops a sense of individual identity and group belonging. Identity is a complex framework that has generated significant discussion and disagreement among theorists. Cokley (2007) writes:

> The study of ethnicity, race, and more specifically their corollaries of ethnic identity and racial identity is a uniquely challenging endeavor with competing conceptualizations and measurements that are influenced by ideology, political climate, and adherence to old paradigms as much as by advances in science (p. 224).

There is not general consensus about the definition of ethnic identity; definitions are dependent on the theoretical perspective one takes on the issue. This dissertation is grounded in the theories of ego identity development, collective identity, and marginality. Recognizing the ongoing nature of the ethnic identity discussion, it is essential to be clear about the perspectives guiding the understanding and interpretation of the data collected in this dissertation.

Exploration and Commitment

Erik Erikson (1968), in his seminal works on psychosocial development, was one of the first major theorists to describe the process of ego identity formation. Erikson believed the main

developmental task of adolescence to be a struggle between identity and role confusion (McGinnis, 2009; Ong & Phinney, 2010; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). Erikson felt that the process of identity exploration was crucial to this identity-defining process, and felt that the end result of exploration was identity "achievement" where an individual is able to make decisions "on his own terms, even though ultimate choices may be a variation of parental wishes" (Marcia, 1966, p. 552).

Erikson's work on identity was further developed by James Marcia, who operationalized ego identity development into four separate possible outcomes along two continuums: exploration and commitment. According to Marcia, individuals fell into one of four statuses: (a) *identity foreclosure* (settling on an identity without exploration), (b) *identity moratorium* (actively engaged in exploration), (c) *identity diffusion* (ongoing exploration without any resolution), and (d) *identity achievement* (reached through exploration; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004) as illustrated in Figure 1.1.

Marcia, like Erikson, believed that the act of identity exploration is essential to the development of a settled sense of identity. He described a person who had not explored his/her own identity as being foreclosed, a term that suggests a decision is made before the full process is allowed to occur. Marcia also believed that commitment was important, that identity achievement rested not only on one's exploration of the possibilities, but also on his/her eventual commitment to a view of him/herself.

While Erikson's and Marcia's models are older and somewhat simplified (i.e., it is now more commonly accepted that identity development, while it may peak in adolescence, can be ongoing throughout one's life [Baden & Steward, 2000]), the importance of exploration and, to some degree commitment, are important constructs in understanding the current thinking on transnational adoptee identity development. All of the activities described earlier, from camps to language classes, represent a form of exploration that adoptees may begin in early childhood and possibly continue throughout their lives.

Commitment is important in that adoptees are most often raised in a culture distinctly different from their birth culture; however, they are racially identified more readily with their birth

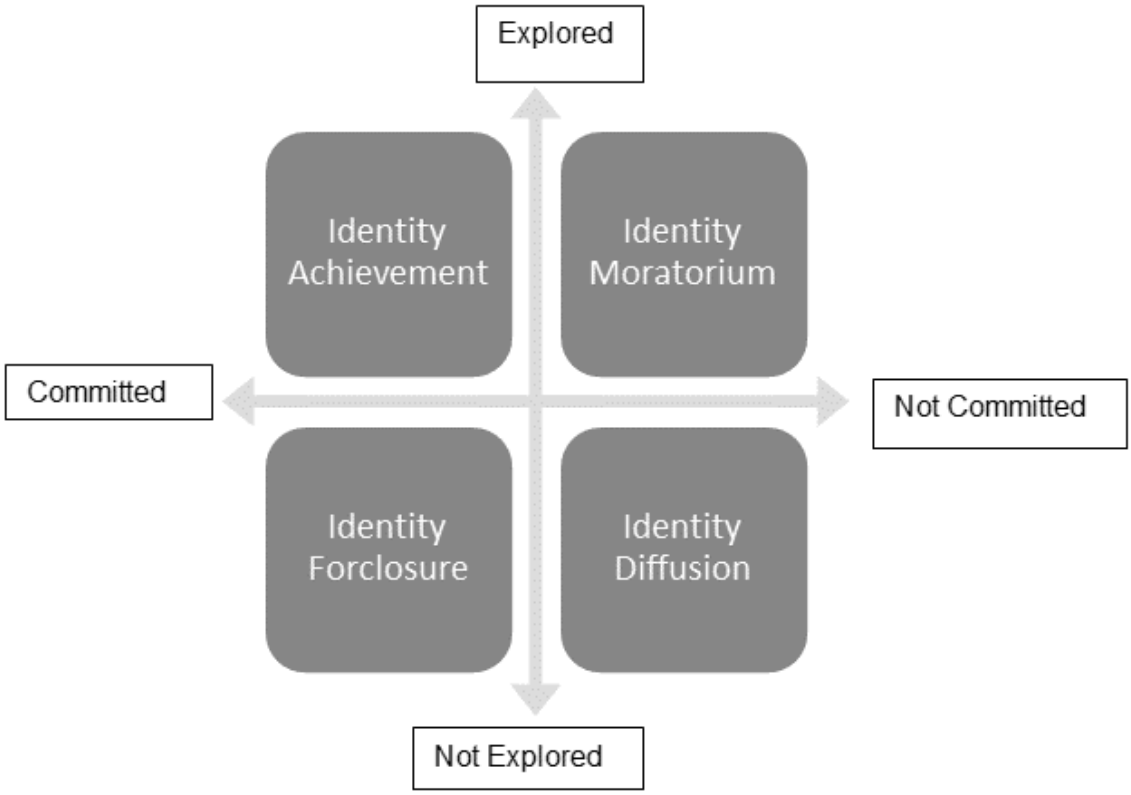

Figure 1.1. Marcia's Four Statuses of Identity. Created by the author based on Marcia's (1966) ego identity statuses.

culture. Questions about belonging to both their adoptive family ethnicity and their birth culture ethnicity are key to identity definition.

Current theories on ethnic identity development are nuanced and sometimes conflicting (Cokley, 2007; Ong, Fuller-Rowell, & Phinney, 2010). There is disagreement on the use of the term ethnic identity; whereas some view it as a "polite" term for race, others see ethnic identity as encompassing race; others see ethnic identity as distinctly different from, though overlapping, with race (Cokley, 2007). For the purpose of this study, I will be using the following definition developed by psychologist Jean Phinney: "Ethnic Identity can be defined as the subjective sense of ethnic group membership that involves self-labeling, sense of belonging, preference for the group, positive evaluation of the ethnic group, ethnic knowledge, and involvement in ethnic group activities" (Phinney, as cited in Cokely, 2007, p. 225).

Following Marcia's general identity model, Phinney emphasized both the process of developing ethnic identity, and the content of that identity (Cokley, 2007; Ong et al., 2010; Phinney, 1988; Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007), putting forward a model that emphasizes the exploration process as crucial to the development of ethnic identity as well as a person's current status of identification. Phinney's definition and model of ethnic identity development are not without their critics, however. Several recent authors and theorists have challenged Phinney's definition of positive ethnic identity development solely on the basis of positive associations with the minority culture with which they are identified. Authors and researchers such as Baden and Steward (2000), Baden (2002) and Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004) have questioned the inherent assumption that a positive ethnic identity is necessarily associated with a minority ethnic identity. Baden (2002), offers evidence that a positive sense of ethnic identity, especially in transnational adoptees, may fall along a range of self-perceptions from fully identifying with the ethnicity of birth to fully identifying with the ethnicity of adoptive parents. Baden concluded that there was very little association between psychological adjustment and identification with birth culture. She goes so far as to conclude that "some of the current training for pre-adoptive transracially adopting parents that suggests both exposure to and competence within the

transracial adoptees' culture of origin may be unnecessary" (p. 188).

Umana-Taylor et al. (2004) shared some of this criticism:

> Past research on ethnic identity has been conducted under this assumption that an achieved ethnic identity implies a positive identification with the group. In such research, the critical component has centered around one's positive response to one's ethnic group, rather than focusing on the process (e.g., ways in which individuals have explored identity and developed an understanding of how they feel about that group membership. (p.12)

If a positive or healthy ethnic identity is not necessarily tied to one's identification with the minority group of which they are viewed as a member, then this makes the process of promoting a healthy ethnic identity more complex. For adoptive parents, the questions then become what to aim for and how to get there.

A key point that can be taken from all of these adaptations of Erikson's theory is the important role exploration plays in ethnic identity development. While nearly every theorist can agree this is an important stage of the process, it remains unclear what a helpful exploration process entails. From a very concrete perspective, parents are likely still left wondering what is the right course of actions that will lead their adopted child to a healthy sense of self, one that incorporates positive ethnic identity and a sense of group belonging.

Collective Identity

While Erikson and Marcia focused on the individual aspects of identity, others expanded to understanding identity as it relates group membership. Tajfel and Turner (1978) describe an overall self-concept as constructed of both individual identity and collective identity. Collective identification is first and foremost a statement about categorical membership:

> A collective identity is one that is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristics in common....Such commonality may be based on ascribed characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, or on achieved states, such as occupation and political party. (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 81)

While individual identity is important to transnational adoptees' understanding of themselves, collective identity or the adoptees' understanding of themselves through their belonging to different groups may be even more important. Collective identity is more fluid and more contextual; it is more likely to change over time and in relationship to people and

surroundings (Ashmore, Deaux, McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004) The contextual nature of collective identity theory is important in understanding the ethnic identity experience of transnational adoptees because they have some membership in at least two ethnicities: (a) the cultural and community they were raised in (most often White middle class American) and (b) the culture and community of their birth and biological heritage.

From a collective identity perspective, an adoptee may feel more like a member of his/her birth culture in some settings, less so in others, but each situation dictates this sense of belonging. In a systematic review of collective identity, Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe (2004) identify key elements critical to collective identity. They note that self-categorization is "widely recognized as the heart of collective identity" (p. 84), in that before anyone can feel one way or the other about membership, he/she must first see him/herself as a member. Self-categorization, however, can also be fluid and situation dependent. How a person chooses to categorize oneself in one situation may be very different in another, adding a layer of complication on to collective identity. Other key elements of collective identity include:

1. Evaluation (how you and others place value on the group);
2. Importance (the importance the group membership plays in your life);
3. Attachment and sense of interdependence (emotional connections to the group, a sense of commonality with other members);
4. Social embeddeness (how important group membership is to one's day-to-day activities);
5. Behavioral involvement (involvement in activities that directly signal their membership in a group); and
6. Content and meaning (a complex category that includes shared beliefs, history and other narratives). (Ashmore, Deaux, and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004).

All of these elements provide an opportunity to understand the experience of transnational adoptees: their sense of belonging to a group they have limited access to; the attachment to the culture of their birth; and the role of behavioral involvement that parents engage in during the adoptee's childhood, and later that they engage in adulthood. For adoptees,

collective identity comes from the meaning that each adoptee makes of his/her shared narrative, both with his/her birth culture, as well as the culture in which he/she is raised. Finally, there may be value in exploring the collective identity that is shared between adoptees, and the role these elements play in the development of a "third space" (Hübinette, 2004) where their identity comes from being a member and nonmember of a group, as well as a full member of an adoptive community.

Marginality

Marginality theory is rooted in the 1920s work of sociologist Robert Park and the idea of the "marginal man" (as cited in Mohanty & Newhill, 2011). The concept is relevant to adoption studies because of its gradient description of belonging and is key for many transnational adoptees. Marginality describes both belonging and not belonging to a group—meaning that while one may be a member, the membership he/she holds is on the margins, not firmly in the middle of the group. Research about adoptees frequently describes this experience; however, it does not necessarily name it marginality. Kim, Suyemoto, and Turner (2010) described it as a "sense of belonging, sense of exclusion" (p. 179). They noted that

> Korean transracial adoptees do not easily fit into these group boundaries. They are considered members of a racial minority group because of their physical characteristics, and thus have an ascribed racial identity as Asian. Simultaneously, Korean transracial adoptees family members are usually of the dominant cultural and racial group. (Kim, Suyemoto, & Turner, 2010, p. 180)

Many adoptees report that they both belong and don't belong to two cultural or ethnic identity groups: that of their birth ethnicity and that of the adoptive family, and may feel on the margins of both. This concept is important because of the assumption about exploration activities; that is, the end goal of most parent efforts to culturally connect their children to their birth culture is an effort to reduce that child's sense of marginal belonging to their birth culture.

Methodology

This dissertation used the Multiple Article Path (MAP) format. Three separate studies using mixed methodology were conducted, asking different but related research questions. The

studies used a combination of research tools, including surveys, standardized scales, and interviews.

Surveys are a well-established tool of data collection, and in fact are one of the most common research tools used by social workers. Surveys can be used to describe, explain, or explore a topic, and when employed using methodologically sound sampling, can accurately represent a large group that may otherwise be difficult to describe (Rubin & Babbie, 2010). Surveys can be administered in a variety of ways, including online and phone surveys, both of which will be employed in the research reported in this dissertation.

Another key tool used in these projects are standardized scales. Standardized scales are useful because they have been tested for both validity and reliability and thus research results can be compared more easily. Measures specific to ethnic identity were used in two of the MAP articles, including the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; see Table 1.1). The MEIM is based on the developmental psychology perspective and measures an individual's exploration and commitment to his/her ethnic identity. Other measures used include the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The study in Chapter 4 of this dissertation uses the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS), a tool designed specifically around Erikson and Marcia's theories of identity resolution, commitment (referred to affirmation in the scale) and exploration (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Phenomenology

In addition to quantitative methods, two of the studies in this dissertation included qualitative data in the form of phenomenological interviews. Phenomenology involves the use of in-depth, open ended interviews to describe and sometimes interpret an individual's experience of a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Key elements of phenomenology involve developing an often small but purposive sample of individuals who have had the experience the researcher is attempting to study. Qualitative phenomenology recognizes that in this form of study there is not one truth to be discovered, but rather multiple ways individuals may experience the same event. Data analysis in phenomenology includes careful review and coding of the narratives shared

Table 1.1. Scale Descriptions

Scale	Instrument purpose	Validity and reliability	Scale design
MEIM-R	Categorizes individuals based on Marcia's 4 identity statuses: foreclosure, moratorium, diffusion, & achievement based on high/low commitment & exploration scores	Cronbach's alpha .76 for exploration, .78 for commitment, and a combined alpha of .81 CFA confirmed the 2 factor structure of the scale	6 questions with two subscales: exploration and commitment. Scale uses a 5 point Likert measure ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree
EIS	Categorizes individuals into 8 categories based on high/low scores on 3 subscales: Exploration, resolution, & affirmation resulting in 8 possible categories	Cronbach's alpha: .82 to .91 for exploration; .76 to .92 for resolution; .34 to .86 for affirmation CFA confirmed the 3 factor structure of the tool	17 questions with three subscales: Exploration (7 items), resolution (4 items), & affirmation (6 items). Uses a 4 point Likert Scale from "does not describe me at all" to "describes me very well"
RSES	Widely used tool that measures self-esteem	Alpha values of .85 or higher consistently found CFA confirmed 2 factor structure, but much research has also supported unified factor structure	10 questions. Uses a 4 point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Large U.S. surveys have found the RSES to be predictive of delinquency and depression
CSES	Measures collective self-esteem based on collective identity theory. The four subscales assess: sense of membership in a group; private esteem for the group they belong to; public views, or belief about how others judge their group; and identity, or the importance one places on membership in the group	Alpha scores on the 4 subscales ranging from .73 for membership subscale, to .80 for the private subscale GFI values acceptable for the 4 factor and hierarchical models	16 questions with 4 subscales: Membership (4 items), Private (4 items), Public (4 items) and Identity (4 items). Uses a 7 point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

Note. Data drawn from Bagley, Bolitho, and Bertrand (1997); Luhtanen and Crocker (1992); Umana-Taylor, Yazedjian, and Bamaca-Gomez (2004); and Yoon (2011).

during the in-depth interviews. Researchers may engage in several cycles of coding and categorizing data before identifying themes around which to organize and describe the data (Creswell, 2007). Also important to qualitative research and reporting is negative case analysis where careful attention and description is made of cases that are dissimilar or outside of the expected response.

MAP Article Outlines

This section outlines the individual research questions, design and methodologies, sample groups and Institutional Review Board (IRB) process for each individual study. Additionally, this section includes information on the peer reviewed journal where each article will be submitted for publication.

Chapter 2: The Impact of Adoption Camp: Adopted Chinese Teens and Their Pre- and Postcamp Perspectives

This is a descriptive, mixed methods study that examined survey results from teens attending a unique, 5-day-long summer adoption camp that is teen-planned and led. The study included precamp surveys as well as self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and ethnic identity scale scores, along with postcamp responses and follow-up scaling. The research questions for this project were:

1. What are the expectations and short term outcomes of teen participation in adoption camp? Does camp increase ethnic identity, and self-esteem?
2. What role do friendships/sibling relationships with other transnational adoptees play in identity resolution?

Another goal of this study was to describe the population of youth attending this adoption camp, their past experiences with ethnic identity exploration activities, their reasons for attending camp, and their feelings about the importance of camp and other activities. IRB approval for this study was obtained through the University of Utah IRB and survey tools were be piloted with a group of five teen adoptees and was reviewed by the adoption agency sponsoring the camp prior to finalization. Parental permission was obtained from the parents of participating campers, as

was assent from the teen participants. The surveys and scales took approximately 30 minutes to complete, with each participant doing both a pre- and postcamp survey. The pre- and postcamp scales were identical, while the survey questions varied. This variation allowed for asking descriptive questions that did not require pre–post analysis, for example, questions about their past travel to their birth country, and different questions specific to camp, such as key reasons for planning to attend (a precamp question) versus most valuable part of their camp experience (a postcamp question). Additionally, 5 campers agreed to participate in postcamp qualitative interviews. Participants were compensated with a $15 iTunes card at the completion of both the survey/scales, and a second card for participating in the follow-up interview.

The study reports descriptive data of the youth attending camp: reasons for attending camp, expectations of camp, past involvement in camps, homeland travel and cultural activities, along with self-reported outcomes of camp. Additionally pre/post camp scale scores were analyzed to determine if attending camp increased the self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and/or ethnic identity scores of adopted youth. These data were analyzed using paired sample *t* tests of the 24 participants. A priori power analysis using the G*power program indicated that at a .8 power, a sample of 34 was needed to minimize the risk of Type II errors, so the study sample was underpowered and this limited the ability to draw conclusions from the quantitative data. The qualitative interviews were analyzed using Atlas.ti software from which codes and themes were developed. The data from surveys, scales and qualitative interviews were triangulated to add strength to the findings. The plan is to submit this research article to the *Journal of Family Social Work*.

Chapter 3: Adult Transnational Adoptees: Perceptions of the Importance of Ethnic-Identity Exploration

The second study for the MAP dissertation was a qualitative phenomenological study of 10 young adults (ages 18 to 30) adopted from different countries into the United States. This study focused on the following research question, with more specific interview questions described below:

1. What lifetime experiences and activities led adoptees to feel resolved in their ethnic view of themselves?
    a. What do adult transnational adoptees say about their experiences with cultural activities, such as language, adoption camp, birth country travel, and so forth?
    b. What were their feelings about these activities at the time, and what are their beliefs and feelings about these activities now?
    c. What are their perceptions about their identity and sense of belonging to both their birth culture and to the culture in which they were raised?

An IRB waiver for this study was obtained through the University of Utah, and participants were recruited through two methods. First, a recruitment notice was sent to adoptive families via two regional and statewide email list-serves. Second, participants were recruited via word of mouth and snowball sampling. In the spirit of phenomenological interviewing, a conscious effort was made to recruit adoptees of different ages, genders, from different countries and with different adoptive experiences, in order to capture as much diversity amid the shared experience of transnational adoption.

Interviews were conducted using an interview guide that focused participants on several aspects of ethnic identity development. First, participants were asked to describe their current and past involvement in ethnic identity exploration (e.g., camp attendance, language or culture classes, birth country travel). Second, they were asked to reflect on their reactions and beliefs about these experiences, both what they can remember at the time, as well as their current thoughts and feelings. Third, participants were asked about their own sense of ethnic identity or belonging to different groups in their lives, the meaning of belonging or not belonging, and how they desired to be identified both in childhood as well as adulthood.

Data from these interviews were entered into Atlas.ti and primary coding was conducted with codes developed as they emerged in the data. Codes were explored for themes and were organized and discussed using the words of participants as much as possible. Because of the small and unique sample population in this study, the findings are not generalizable, but provide

implications for future studies. This article will be submitted to *Adoption Quarterly*, a peer reviewed journal specifically focused on adoption related research.

Chapter 4: Transnational Adoptees and Identity: The Impact of Language Fluency, Birth Country Travel, and Adoptee Friendships

The third MAP article seeks to identify the more nuanced aspects of cultural connection activities and their impact on ethnic identity in adoptees. For this study, the hypothesis was that three specific activities are helpful to identity resolution: birth country travel, fluency in the language of an adoptee's birth country, and close friendships with other transnational adoptees. This hypothesis is reflected in the research questions guiding this dissertation:

1. What lifetime experiences and activities lead adoptees to feel resolved in their view of themselves ethnically?
2. What role do friendships with other transnational adoptees play in identity resolution?

Article 3 first defined and categorized aspects of all three activities, travel, language and relationships. Categories were operationalized to allow for comparison and were mutually exclusive for comparison's sake. The study sought to link resolved ethnic identity (as defined on the subscales of the EIS measure) with language fluency, travel experience, and connection with other adoptees. The EIS, and subscale scores allowed for both consideration as numerical variables (i.e., scale scores) as well as categorical variables (identity achievement vs. identity diffusion, etc.). In this case, the research sought to establish if birth country travel (no travel/have travelled), language fluency (yes/ no), and relationships with other adoptees (have had important relationships in my life/haven't had important relationships) predict either EIS scores, or participant categorization on the EIS. Permission to use the EIS was obtained for use in this dissertation.

Participants for this study were recruited through two methods. First, initial participants were recruited through online communities including adoptive forums and list-serves, Facebook pages and through direct email contact with coordinators of face-to-face adoptee groups. Once an initial group of participants was recruited, snowball sampling was also used to expand the reach of this study chi-square test for independence were used to examine how the three

independent variables (language fluency, birth country travel, relationships with other adoptees) individually predicted group membership on the dependent variable (identity achievement or diffusion on the EIS). Chi-square testing can be used because each of the independent variables is categorical, and the EIS scale can be considered categorically. In this way, each independent variable was considered individually in correlation to the ethnic identity resolution subscale and the ethnic identify affirmation subscale. The in order to achieve adequate power within this study, the G*Power program suggested a minimum a priori sample size of 34, which was achieved with 67 eligible survey takers reported in this chapter. As a part of the MAP process, Chapter 4 will also be submitted to *Adoption Quarterly*, a peer reviewed journal focused specifically on topics relevant to adoptive families.

References

Adams, G., Tessler, R., & Gamache, G. (2005). The development of ethnic identity among Chinese adoptees: Paradoxical effects of school diversity. *Adoption Quarterly, 8*(3), 25–46. doi:10.1300/J145v08n02•02

Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLauglin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(1), 80–114.

Baden, A. L., & Steward, R. J. (2000). A framework for use with racially and culturally integrated families: The cultural-racial identity model as applied to transracial adoption. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, *9*(42), 309–337.

Baden, A. L. (2002). The psychological adjustment of transracial adoptees: An application of the cultural-racial identity model. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, *11*(2), 167–191.

Baden, A. L., & Raible, J. W. (2010). Sibling relationships in transracial adoptive families. In J. Caspi (Ed.), *Sibling development: Implications for mental health practitioners* (pp. 289–319). New York, NY: Springer.

Bagley, C., Bolitho, F., & Bertrand, L. (1997). Norms and construct validity of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in Canadian high school populations: Implications for counseling. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, *31*(1), 82–92.

Bailey, J. D. (2006). A practice model to protect the ethnic identity of international adoptees. *Journal of Family Social Work, 10*(3), 1–11.

Bergquist, K. L. (2003). Exploring the impact of birth country travel of Korean adoptees. *Journal of Family Social Work, 7*(4), 45–61.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cokley, K. (2007). Critical issues in the measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the state of the field. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 224–234. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.224

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

Heimsoth, D., & Laser, J. A. (2008). Transracial adoption: Expatriate parents living in China with their adopted Chinese children. *International Social Work*, *51*(5), 651–668.

Howell, S. (2009). Return journeys and the search for roots: Contradictory values concerning identity. In D. Marre & L. Briggs (Eds.), *International adoption global inequalities and the circulation of children* (pp. 256–270). New York: New York University Press.

Hubinette, T. (2004). Adopted Koreans and the development of identity in the “third space.” *Adoption & Fostering, 28*(1), 16–24.

Huh, N. S., & Reid, W. J. (2000). Intercountry, transracial adoption and ethnic identity: A Korean example. *International Social Work, 43*(1), 75–87.

Juffer, F., & van Ijzendoorn, M. H. (2007). Adoptees do not lack self-esteem: A meta-analysis of studies on self-esteem of transracial, international, and domestic adoptees. *Psychological Bulletin, 133*(6), 1067–1083.

Kim, G. S., Suyemoto, K. L., & Turner, C. B. (2010). “Sense of belonging, sense of exclusion, and racial and ethnic identities in Korean transracial adoptees”: Correction to Kim, Suyemoto, and Turner (2010). *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*(4), 598. doi:10.1037/a0021430

Lee, D., Quintana, S. (2005). Benefits of cultural exposure and development of Korean perspective-taking ability for transracially adopted Korean children. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *11*(2), 130–143.

Lee, R., Grotevant, H. D., Hellerstedt, W. L., & Gunnar, M. (2006). Cultural socialization in families with internationally adopted children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *20*(4), 571–580.

Lee Shiao, J., & Tuan, M. H. (2008). Korean adoptees and the social context of ethnic exploration. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(4), 1023–1066.

Manning, L. (2001). International adoption and bi-cultural identity development: A case study of a Chinese cultural school. *The Journal of Intergroup Relations*, *28*(1), 16–30.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity statuses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3*(5), 551–558.

McGinnis, H., Livingston Smith, S., Ryan, S. D., & Howard, J. A. (2009). *Beyond culture camp: Promoting healthy identity formation in adoption* (Research Report). Retrieved from Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute website: http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research /2009_11_culture_camp.php

Meier, D. I. (1999). Cultural identity and place in adult Korean-American intercountry adoptees. *Adoption Quarterly, 3*(1), 15–48. doi:10.1300/J145v03n01_03

Mohanty, J. (2010). Development of the ethnic and racial socialization of transracial adoptee scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 20*(6), 600–610.

Mohanty, J., Keokse, G., & Sales, E. (2007). Family cultural socialization, ethnic identity, and self-esteem: Web-based survey of international adult adoptees. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 15*(3–4), 153–172. doi:10.1300/J051v15n03_07

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. (2006). Adjustment of international adoptees: Implications for practice and a future research agenda. *Children & Youth Services Review, 28*(4), 384–395. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.04.013

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. (2008). A theoretical framework for understanding ethnic socialization among international adoptees. *Families in Society, 89*(4), 543–550.

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. E. (2011). Asian adolescent and young adult adoptees' psychological well-being: Examining the mediating role of marginality. *Children & Youth Services Review, 33*(7), 1189–1195. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.02.016

Ong, A. D., Fuller-Rowell, T. E., & Phinney, J. S. (2010). Measurement of ethnic identity: Recurrent and emergent Issues. *Identity, 10*(1), 39–49. doi:10.1080/15283481003676226

Paulsen, C., & Merighi, J. R. (2009). Adoption preparedness, cultural engagement, and parental satisfaction in intercountry adoption. *Adoption Quarterly, 12*(1), 1–18. doi:10.1080/10926750902791540

Pfund, P. (1994). Intercountry adoption: The 1993 Hague Convention: Its purpose, implementation, and promise. *Family Law Quarterly, 28*(1), 53-88.

Phinney, J. S. (1988, June). *The development of ethnic identity in adolescents*. Paper presented at the Utah State University Workshop on Identity Formation: Theoretical and Empirical Issues, Logan, UT).

Phinney, J. S., Jacoby, B., & Silva, C. (2007). Positive intergroup attitudes: The role of ethnic identity. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31*(5), 478–490. doi:10.1177/0165025407081466

Ponte, I. C., Wang, L. K., & Fan, S. P. S. (2010). Returning to China: The experience of adopted Chinese children and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly, 13*(3), 100–124.

Petrucci, C. J. (2009). A primer for social worker researchers on how to conduct a multnomial logistic regression. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *35*,193–205.

Peduzzi, P., Concato, J., Kemper, E., Holford, T. R., & Feinstein, A. R. (1996). A simulation study of the number of events per variable in logistic regression analysis. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, *49*(12), 1373–1379.

Prebin, E. (2008). Three-week re-education to Koreaness. *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, *7*(2), 323–355.

Ponte, I., Wang, L., & Fan, S. (2010). Returning to China: The experience of adopted Chinese children and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly*, *13*, 100–124.

Quiroz, P.A. (2012). Cultural tourism in transnational adoption: "Staged authenticity" and its implications for adopted children. *Journal of Family Issues*, *33*(4), 527–555.

Randolph, T. H., & Holtzman, M. (2010). The Role of heritage camps in identity development among Korean transnational adoptees: A relational dialectics approach. *Adoption Quarterly*, *13*, 75–99.

Rojewski, J. W. (2005). A typical American family? How adoptive families acknowledge and incorporate Chinese cultural heritage in their lives. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 22*(2), 133–164. doi:10.1007/s10560-005-3415-x

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. (2007). *Essential research methods for social work*. Belmont, CA: Thompson Brooks/Cole.

Sands, E. (2009). Visiting the native land. *Clinical Child Psychology*, *14*(4), 537–539.

Scroggs, P. H., & Heitfield, H. (2001). International adopters and their children: Birth culture ties. *Gender Issues, 19*(4), 3–30.

Shin, S. (2010). "What about me? I'm not like Chinese but I'm not like American": Heritage-language learning and identity of mixed heritage adults. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *9*, 203–219.

Song, S., & Lee, R. M. (2009). The past and present cultural experiences of adopted Korean American adults. *Adoption Quarterly*, *12*, 19–36.

Tan, T. T., & Michael, J. N. (2004). White parents' attitudes towards their adopted Chinese daughters' ethnic identity. *Adoption Quarterly, 7*(4), 57–76. doi:10.1300/J145v07n04_03

Tuan, M. (2008). Domestic and international transracial adoption: A synopsis of the literature. *Sociology Compass, 2*(6), 1848–1859.

Tuan, M., & Shiao, J. L. (2011). *Choosing ethnicity, negotiating race: Korean adoptees in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yazedjian, A., & Bámaca-Gómez, M. (2004). Developing the ethnic identity scale using Eriksonian and social identity perspectives. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 4*(1), 9–38. doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0401_2

U.S. Department of State. (2010). FY 2010 annual report on intercountry adoptions. Washington, DC: Author.

Verhulst, F. C. (2008). International adoption and mental health: Long-term behavioral outcomes. In M. E. Garralda & J.-P. Raynaud (Eds.), *Culture and conflict in child and adolescent mental health* (pp. 83–105). Lanham, MD: Aronson.

Vonk, M. E., & Massatti, R. R. (2008). Factors related to transracial adoptive parents' levels of cultural competence. *Adoption Quarterly, 11*(3), 204–226.

Yoon, D. P. (2004). Intercountry adoption: The importance of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being for Korean-born adopted children. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 13*(2), 71–89. doi:10.1300/J051v13n02_04

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF ADOPTION CAMP: ADOPTED CHINESE TEENS AND THEIR PRE- AND POSTCAMP PERSPECTIVES

Over the past 30 years parents, social workers and other adoption professionals have increasingly recognized and promoted ethnic identity development in transnational adoptees. Thus the question about what types of activities provide the best outcomes has become more salient. Adoptive parents are now encouraged (by adoption professionals and the adoption community) to be actively involved in promoting their children's ethnic identity through activities such as holiday celebrations, birth country travel, language promotion and adoption camps.

Adoption camps have long been a way that agencies and families have sought to deliver this connection and understanding of their child's birth culture. An informal internet search reveals dozens of camp programs available to transnationally adopted children from various countries and for many different ages (www.camps.adoption.com). In 2009, the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute published a report, titled *Beyond Culture Camp: Promoting Healthy Identity Formation in Adoption*, which talked specifically about the role of culture camp:

> For families who have adopted internationally, myriad programs and services have sprung up since the late 1980's in part due to the maturation of the first generation of international adoptees. One major example is "culture camps" which were created by adoptive parents and practitioners to help children better understand their backgrounds and integrate them into their sense of themselves. The camps can last from a day to a week and usually include exposure to elements of home culture such as language, cuisine, art and dance. (McGinnis, Livingston Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009, p. 35)

Despite the proliferation of adoption camps, the questions remain about whether camps are helpful, and specifically, what aspects or elements of camps are most useful in promoting positive ethnic identity. This study explores the impact of one adoption camp that represents a newer development in the camp experience: the camp, coordinated by a large China adoption agency, is led by adopted teens from China, who provide ideas and opinions on the agenda, activities and

programming. These same teens act as mentors and camp counselors for their peers attending camp.

In this mixed methods study, participants were surveyed before and after attending this specific camp in the summer of 2011. In addition, participants were asked a number of open-ended questions to further understand their experiences. The research questions guiding this study were: What are the expectations and short term outcomes of teen participation in adoption camp? And, does camp participation increase ethnic identity and self-esteem? It was hypothesized that attendance at this adoption camp would increase the self-esteem, collective identity and ethnic identity scales scores of the teens attending the camp.

Literature Review

Information about the specific role and impact of adoption camps in the lives of adoptees is scarce in the professional literature. There is, however, an abundance of research about parental/adoptee involvement ethnic identity exploration in general. For example, Rowjewski (2005) surveyed families of children adopted from China who were ages 2 months to 13 years, and asked about the families' knowledge and involvement in Chinese culture, holidays, and relationships with others from their birth culture. Rowjewski found that very few parents ignored or rejected their child's cultural heritage, but that level of involvement varied across families and was influenced by the age of the adopted child. A study by Huh and Reid (2000) found that adoptee participation in a broad category of cultural activities, along with open parental communication about adoption, were strongly associated with high self-reported ethnic identity, especially when the adoptees experienced racism in school settings. Other studies have found strong, positive correlations between parental support of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being (Yoon, 2004). From a study of 241 Korean adoptees ages 12 to 18, Yoon concluded that the results of his data "suggest(s) that a negative sense of ethnic identity represents a vulnerability to psychosocial well-being" (Yoon, 2004, p. 71). While these more general studies suggest that ethnic identity experiences are useful for transnational adoptees, the information is not specific

enough to help with decision making regarding which activities are most important and/or why they are important.

While to the author's knowledge, no data exist that evaluate or compare different strategies for promoting the development of ethnic identity, several different strategies are frequently noted in the literature. In the Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute report, McGinnis et al. (2009) noted that "positive racial/ethnic identity development is most effectively facilitated by 'lived' experiences such as travel to native country, attending racially diverse schools, and having role models of their own race/ethnicity" (p. 6). In addition to these lived experiences, research also frequently notes parental encouragement of ethnic identity exploration, attending culture camps, taking language courses, participating in cultural celebrations (among other strategies) are correlated to positive ethnic identity development (Bergquist, 2003; Mohanty & Newhill, 2006; Rowjewski, 2005; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tuan & Shiao, 2011).

There are several challenges to researching the impact of adoption camp as a specific strategy. First, camps can differ greatly in their content and by age of attendees. Adoption camps may focus on school-aged children or teens, and emphasize cultural learning, adoption in general, or fun and socialization. To date, very little has been written on the role and impact of adoption camp attendance on adoptees' sense of belonging. Only two studies appear to report findings specific to the camp experience. Randolph and Holzman (2010) conducted qualitative interviews with five adult adoptees and their parents about past camp experiences. They noted that parents perceived camp to positively impact their child's ethnic identity. However, the adult adoptees reported that while camp was a fun experience, these individuals felt that the short duration of camp meant that they had little or no long-term impact. The Evan B. Donaldson Institute (2009) reported that 56% of participants had attended culture camp at some point growing up, and that of these, 59% of these reported camps were "helpful." A comprehensive search of the literature found no other data about the implications of adoption camp on identity development.

Theoretical Frameworks

Findings from this study are examined through two theoretical frameworks: collective identity and marginality theories. These constructs are interrelated and speak to the importance of identity formation that develops from a sense of belonging and/or exclusion.

Collective Identity

Tajfel and Turner (1978) describe an overall self-concept as constructed with both individual identity and collective identity. Collective identification is first and foremost a statement about categorical membership:

> A collective identity is one that is shared with a group of others who have (or are believed to have) some characteristics in common....Such commonality may be based on ascribed characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender, or on achieved states, such as occupation and political party. (Ashmore, Deaux, & McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004, p. 81)

The contextual nature of collective identity theory is important in understanding the ethnic identity experience of transnational adoptees because they have some membership in at least two ethnicities: (a) the culture and community in which they were raised (most often White middle class American) and (b) the culture and community of their birth and biological heritage.

From a collective identity perspective, an adoptee may feel more like a member of his/her birth culture in some settings, less so in others, but each situation dictates this sense of belonging (Ashmore et al., 2004). Additionally, the concept of collective identity (identity is formed in part through group membership) applies to the sense of belonging that may develop as adoptees are able to see themselves as a part of a large, vibrant adoptive group (an experience that can come from adoption camp) and draw a sense of identity from this reference point.

Marginality

Marginality theory describes when ersons are viewed as relatively different from the norm or as cast out to varying degrees from the societal ‘center’ to the periphery (Hall, Stevens & Meleis, 1994). Marginality is relevant to adoption studies because of its gradient description of belonging, a feeling common to many transnational adoptees (Mohanty & Newhill, 2011). Marginality describes both belonging and not belonging to a group—that while one may be a

member, the membership he/she holds is on the margins, not firmly in the middle of the group. Research about adoptees frequently describes this experience; however, it does not necessarily name it marginality. Kim, Suyemoto, and Turner (2010) described it as a "sense of belonging, sense of exclusion" (p. 179); in particular, they noted that

> Korean transracial adoptees do not easily fit into these group boundaries. They are considered members of a racial minority group because of their physical characteristics, and thus have an ascribed racial identity as Asian. Simultaneously, Korean transracial adoptees family members are usually of the dominant cultural and racial group. (p. 180)

Transnational adoptees may feel that they both belong and don't belong to two cultural or ethnic identity groups: that of their birth ethnicity and that of the adoptive family, and may feel on the margins of both. This concept is important because of the assumption about the role of adoption camp, and why so many parents may wish to send their children; that the end goal is an effort to reduce a child's sense of marginal belonging to their birth culture. Both theoretical frames support the concept that sending a child to adoption camp could have the added effect of introducing an adopted child to a group whose shared adoption experience provides a sense of collective identity not usually experienced in an adoptee's day-to-day life.

Methodology

This study used a sequential mixed methods design to explore the experiences of adolescents attending a week-long adoption camp for youth adopted from China. This design was chosen because of the intent to evaluate the impact of the camp. In this way, a sequential mixed methods design allows for the initial collection of quantitative data, followed by qualitative interviews that can help illuminate and provide more detail to understand the initial quantitative findings (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This camp was chosen specifically because of its uniqueness; it developed as a youth-led, youth-run program, where experienced adoptees decide on the camp activities and focus, and selected youth act in the role of mentors to younger campers during the week. Mixed methods were selected for to address the research questions for several reasons. First, mixed methods provide an opportunity to triangulate the data, looking for "convergence, corroboration, and correspondence" (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p. 62). When both quantitative and qualitative data agree, a stronger argument can be made for the

findings of the study. Additionally, mixed methods allow for expansion of the data, so that there is greater breadth in the data discovered and reported (Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). Finally, mixed methods allow for illustration, or the ability of qualitative findings to provide in-depth examples of the quantitative data (Bryman, 2006).

This study was developed as a pre/post camp survey with phenomenologically based qualitative follow-up interviews. The survey included both scaled and open ended questions about involvement in cultural activities, birth country travel, experience with racism, and their feelings about and reasons for attending this adoption camp (see Appendices A and B). Three standardized scales were also included: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) and the Multi Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM; see Table 2.1). These scales were chosen in order to measure individual self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and ethnic identity both pre camp and post camp. Phenomenology is a frequently used method of qualitative research that involves the use of in-depth, open ended questions to describe and sometimes interpret an individual's experience of a particular phenomenon (Cresswell, 2007). Phenomenology focuses on identify individuals who have shared a similar experience, and uses coding and the eventual development of themes to identify the "essence" (Moustakas, 1994) of this experience. Capturing one's sense of belonging and comfort with their identity is nuanced, and therefore a phenomenological approach is useful in identifying themes that may exist within very diverse experiences. Cresswell (2007) recommends 5 to 25 participants in phenomenologically guided studies. In this study, 5 participants agreed to follow up interviews about their camp experience, and these interviews were conducted via audio conference, recorded and transcribed, and then coded for content, and organized into themes (see Appendix C). All participants were assigned pseudonyms. These 5 participants shared repetitive themes and ideas, and therefore were enough to obtain saturation. The project was approved by the University of Utah Institutional Review Board. Surveys and scales were administered using a secure online survey system, and pre- and postcamp data were linked for comparison using unique identifiers. The surveys/scales were made available to campers up to 6 weeks prior to attending camp, and were completed no more than 4 weeks

Table 2.1. Scale Reliability and Validity

Scale	Reliability	Validity
MEIM	EI subscale reporting an alpha coefficient medium of .85; OGO subscale reports an alpha coefficient median of .75.	Factor analysis of EI scale found a range between 20% and 31% of EI accounting for variance. Factor analysis of the OGO found this subscale accounted for between 9% and 11% of the variance.
RSES	Alpha coefficient scores ranging from .84-.95	55% of the variance can be attributed to one component
CSES	Alpha coefficient scores for the overall scale ranged from .83-.88	60.7% of the variance was accounted for by 4 factors.

Note. Data drawn from Luhtanen and Crocker (1992); Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Straya (2003); and Sinclair et al. (2010).

following the end of camp. Descriptive data, along with paired sample *t* tests on pre- and postdata, were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS, while survey and follow-up interview data were coded and organized using the qualitative software program Atlas.ti.

Measurement

Three standardized scales were used as pre/post camp inventories. The first measure, the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), is comprised of, ethnic identity search, affirmation, belonging, and commitment. It includes six questions with two subscales, exploration and commitment (also call Other Group Orientation, or OGO; Ponterotto, Gretchen, Utsey, Stracuzzi, & Straya, 2003). The scale uses a 5-point Likert measure ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Phinney, 1992). The second measure, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a widely used tool that measures self-esteem. The measure includes 10 questions using a 4-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Large U.S. surveys have found the RSES to be predictive of delinquency and depression (Bagley, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 1997). The third scale used was the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES), which measures self-esteem based on collective identity theory. The four subscales assess: sense of membership in a group; private esteem for the group they belong to; public views, or belief about how others judge their group; and identity, or the importance one places on membership in the group. The CSES includes 16 questions with four subscales: Membership (four items), Private (four items), Public (four items) and Identity (four items). The CSES uses a 7-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Recruitment

The sponsor agency of the adoption camp agreed to facilitate contact between the researcher and potential participants during the recruitment process. The recruitment letter inviting campers to participate in a research study was given to the camp coordinators who then sent it out to each new registrant of their program. After enrolling in camp a second reminder was sent, and a week before the camp start a third and final reminder was sent. Potential participants

were then asked to provide a parent email through which I could seek consent. Once consent was obtained, interested campers were emailed both assent and the precamp survey links hosted by secure servers. Two weeks following the conclusion of camp, participants were sent the post - test survey, with a follow up prompt at 4 weeks. Camp staff reported that there were approximately 50 attendees at this camp, and 24 agreed to take part, demonstrating a participation rate of about 48% within the target population. Nothing is known about any potential differences between the survey takers and nontakers, so the convenience sample limits the ability to generalize study findings to all camp attenders. On the post study, participants were asked if they were willing to participate in a phone interview, and five indicated their interest in participating. Each participant was compensated with iTunes cards as a thank you for their time.

Brief Description of the Camp

As noted earlier, this specific camp was selected because of its unique structure of being peer led by other teen adoptees from China. The program states in its mission that the goal of camp is to "Share openly without adult interference, discover commonalities, build leadership skills, reach out and make a positive different in the community, feel pride in our identity, [and] take control of our destiny" (www.chinaadopteen.com). A main thrust of the program is the promotion of relationships between Chinese adoptees, and to allow teens engaged with the program primary control over the agenda. Each summer camp has a teen committee that is involved in the planning of camp activities. These committee members then act as camp counselors for the other attendees. The camp described in this study moves from location each year, with the goal of increasing accessibility to adoptees around the United States, and offering new and fun experiences to campers each session.

Results

Participants

Twenty-five participants responded to both the pre- and postcamp survey. Twenty-three of the participants actually attended camp; 2 did not attend but completed the surveys. Descriptive and *t*-test results include analysis of the 23 surveys from participants who attended

camp. This sample was out of approximately 50 total campers (personal communication, camp director, July 15, 2011). One hundred percent of the responders were female, between the ages of 13 and 18. Fifty-two percent of campers had attended this camp in previous years, while 48% were new attendees.

Camper's Past Involvement in Cultural Activities

Participants were asked a number of questions about their involvement in other, specified cultural activities including Chinese language classes, culture classes, holiday celebrations, reading or studying about China in their school work, travel back to China, and relationships they and their families have with others who are Chinese (See Table 2.2). On the precamp survey, 52.4% reported having never taken a Chinese language class, while 14.3% report taking language classes between one and two times per year. Twenty-six percent of the participants indicated they take weekly lessons in Chinese language, while 4.3% (*n* = 1) report having daily instruction in Chinese language.

When asked about participation in culture classes, 59.1% stated they had never been involved in this type of activity. In addition, 13.6% stated they participate in Chinese culture classes once per year, while an additional 27.3% reported attending culture classes on either a monthly or weekly basis. Sixty-eight percent of campers reported they attend a Chinese holiday celebration once or twice per year; however, 22.7% of campers also reported that they never attend Chinese holiday celebrations. When asked if they read or study about China for school projects, about half (54.6%) reported doing this once or twice per year, 4.2% reported doing so daily, with 31.8% reporting they never read or study about China. These data are presented in Table 2.2.

Return Travel to China

Half of the respondents reported return travel to China since their adoption; 50% had traveled (*n* = 11), while 50% (*n* = 11) had not, with one nonresponse. The majority of the return travelers (81.8%) had made only one return trip to China, while 18.2% had traveled back on two

Table 2.2. Participation in Cultural Activities

What other Chinese cultural related activities do you participate in?	Never (%)	Once per year (%)	Twice per year (%)	Monthly (%)	Weekly (%)	Daily (%)
Chinese language class	52.4	9.5	4.8	0.0	28.6	4.8
Chinese culture Class	59.1	13.6	0.0	9.1	18.2	0.0
Chinese holiday celebrations	29.2	41.7	25	4.2	0.0	0.0
Reading or studying about China for school projects	31.8	45.5	9.1	9.1	0.0	4.5

occasions. No campers had traveled to China more than twice. The age at which adoptees traveled varied greatly: 30.8% of the trips occurred when the participants were 5 and under, and all but one of these trips (where participants were under age 5) were to adopt a younger sibling; 23.1% traveled between ages 6 to 8, 7.7% between the ages of 9 and 10 years, 30.8% were 10 to12, and 23.1 were 13 years or older. Almost all of the trips that adoptees took after age 5 were either to tour and/or visit their orphanages or "finding places" (a term used to describe the location where a child was reported found and rendered to an orphanage). Two trips were youth participating in agency run, organized tours for adoptees (See Table 2.3).

Friendships

On the precamp survey, 100% of participants indicated that they felt they fit into their peer group. Seventy-seven percent indicated they had close friends who are Chinese, while only 30% of them reported their parents having close Chinese friends. Participants offered a range of comments about their feelings of acceptance from having a very accepting peer group, to sharing similar interests, to their peer group "not caring" about race. Some answers were more qualified, including "because we don't focus on my adoption"; "I most often feel welcome, even if I am adopted"; and "[it's] hard to grow up in a society built around mostly White people but I believe America is becoming a more diverse country." Adoptees named making new friends as a major factor in their decision to attend camp; 60.8% of campers ranked it as their number one or number two reason for attendance. When asked postcamp, 96% of attendees indicated they either strongly agree or agree with the statement that they made friends at camp they plan to stay in contact with.

Experiences With Racism

Participants were asked if people had ever made mean or hurtful comments to them about being Chinese, and 82.6% responded that this had occurred. Of those who indicated they had this experience, there were some common threads in the narratives. Several teens reported they had been subjected to derogatory comments about their facial features such as the shape of

Table 2.3. Reasons for Birth Country Travel

Reasons for travel	Visiting orphanage	Tourism & sightseeing	Part of a school or performance group	Adopting a sibling
Percentage reporting this was all or part of the purpose of their trip	58% (*n* = 7)	41% (*n* = 5)	17% (*n* = 2)	17% (*n* = 2)

their eyes. Others reported that “jokes” about race or racial stereotypes were among the most common experiences.

Postcamp Beliefs

On a questionnaire asking participants for postcamp views of their experience, 100% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “I made friends at camp who I plan to stay in contact with.” One hundred percent also agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “attending camp made me feel good about my adoption.” When asked about the statement “Camp helped me deal with mean or hurtful comments people may make about my race,” 27.3% strongly agreed, 68.2% agreed, 4.5% disagreed, and 0.0% strongly disagreed. When asked if “attending camp made me feel understood by others,” 47.8% strongly agreed, 43.5% agreed, 4.3% disagreed, and 4.3% felt the question was not applicable.

Pre- and Posttest Comparisons

Paired sample *t* tests were conducted to see if camp attendance had any impact on participant scores on three widely used scales: the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM), and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSES). The hypothesis that was tested was that camp attendance would positively impact self-esteem, ethnic identity, and collective self-esteem. Paired sample *t* tests were conducted to compare precamp scores on the RSE, MEIM and CSES to postcamp scores. The results from this analysis indicate no significant difference in scale scores between any of the measures pre- and postcamp (see Table 2.4). It is important to note that this study sample was low powered, and not randomly assigned, so the risk of a type II error is high.

In-Depth Interviews

Five follow-up, telephonic interviews were conducted with participants within 1 month of their camp attendance asking about reasons for attending camp and perceived benefits of the cam. From these interviews, several key themes developed.

Table 2.4. Paired-Sample *t*-Test Results of Pre- and Postcamp Scores

Scale	Pretest *M*(*SD*)	Posttest *M*(*SD*)	*t*	*p*
RSE	2.24(.42)	2.22(.42)	0.37	.72
CSES	5.17(.63)	5.22(.68)	−0.42	.68
MEIM	2.89(.24)	2.99(.38)	−1.49	.15

Theme 1: The Importance of Developing Relationships at Camp

The most predominant theme from the five interviews can be described as "It's good to be with other adoptees, and camp is a way to make this happen." Each teen who was interviewed made mention of the importance that building relationships with other adoptees played in their camp experience. Some participants discussed a feeling of general acceptance at camp, noting that having the common link of adoption from China provided an instant framework for relationships:

> That is a big issue that kids our age go through, acceptance through life. So like it was so amazing and touching to just show up at some camp in some state that I had like no clue about, well other than the family there, but like my point is you had no clue who these kids were, and just having that connection with other kids through adoption and your culture, your background, is really cool. You don't even have to like the same things, but you still connect. (Anne)

In addition to feeling accepted, the teens also reported that they felt more understood in these relationships with other adoptees, and that there was comfort and familiarity that came from being in an environment where everyone shared a similar life story, something not experienced in their day-to-day life at home:

> It's just, you don't have to go through the whole "where are you from, do you know Chinese? What is China like?" You get to skip that whole step and you know that they have gone through the same thing and everything. (Kelly)

Also, Nora explained, "Well, a lot of us don't know our birthdays, so we just make up our birthday times and dates and it's really fun" Several of the interview participants discussed that, despite the short nature of camp, these relationships, and this experience of acceptance, served a longer term purpose. For instance, Anne said, "[Back at home] I can think, 'oh, he might not like me,' but I have a whole group of kids that like, I can see every summer that just love me for who I am. And it's just really nice." Technology also played a role in the ability for attendees to maintain friendships with individuals they met at camp. Participants noted that they stay connect to each other, to camp counselors and to the camp itself through Facebook, and that they regularly text each other for support and connection. In talking about how she maintains relationships with her camp peers, Anne noted "It's a regular friendship, just long distance usually."

Theme 2: What We Do at Camp Is Important

As mentioned, the teen camp described in this study takes a different approach than the more typical culture camp. The camp targets teens only, and the focus is not necessarily on learning Chinese culture or having discussions about adoption. The camp agenda is decided by a selected group of adopted teens who have attended the camp in the past and demonstrated leadership skills. These teens work with staff at the adoption agency to plan activities with the primary goal of forming connections with one another and in generally having fun. Limited cultural activities, workshops and discussions are planned toward the end of the week. This model, of promoting friendships first, and exploring culture and adoption issues second appeared to be appreciated by many of the attendees, regardless of their past experiences with other adoption related camps:

> When I was little I went to a bunch of adoption camps that just talked about how, you know, what it means to be adopted, things like that. Things you could say to people if they asked you nosey questions, things like that. So I was kind of iffy [about attending this camp] because I had already been to so many of those, that, you know, I didn't really want to go to another one. (Naomi)

Naomi noted that this camp was different because they spent far more time getting to know other campers: "I was afraid that it was going to be one of those camps where you like just talk about adoption and what it means to be adopted and things like that. That's not really as much fun." Other campers had attended and enjoyed more traditional camps, and this positive camp experience is what motivated them to attend this camp: "So that is the main reason we decided to try [this camp] because we thought it would kinda be like the camp that we go to during the school year" (Mia). Whether attendees have positive or negative experience attending other, more traditionally designed adoption camps, study participants agreed that the design of this camp is unique and accomplished something different from other camps:

> Well, I think [this camp] allows you to make connections with a lot more of these adopted teenagers who are our age, because at other camps it's a lot of preplanned activities where you are in a group of people that you don't really talk to because you have the activity that you are set on and stuff. So at [this camp] there is a lot more open opportunities to actually connect to these people. Because even though we do a lot of activities they are all pretty fun, and they are get to know each other activities. (Mia)

Theme 3: Having Connections With Other Adoptees Is Harder at Home

Interview participants had different experiences connecting with other adoptees in their day-to-day lives. Some youth reported that they had no friendships with other adoptees outside of their camp experience, while others reported they had one or two close friendships. No participant indicated that other transnational adoptees were a part of their day-to-day school life. Kelly described the one friendship she has with another adoptee: "We meet up every now and then, but me and her, I'm the only friend, she's the only friend that she's adopted too and all." Mia noted,

> Well, at school, all of my friends are Caucasian, most of them, but since I also go to Chinese school I have had two really close friends since I was adopted, one of them was actually from the same orphanage. And so, I have some Asian friends, but I don't see them as often, and I guess I don't feel as close to them as I do with my school friends who aren't Asian.

Theme 4: I'm Equipped to Handle Racism

Nearly all of the participants interviewed described having experienced some form of racism during their lives (only 1 of the 5 reported never having this experience). Of these 4, all noted that racism was more prominent and more difficult to deal with during elementary school:

> No, in elementary school, I was totally, I did not understand why people were making so much fun of me or why they were picking on me because I was different or something. I felt different but, um, yea, little kids and younger kids don't understand that you should just forget, you know, shake it off. (Nora)

The teens noted that they were occasionally teased about the shape of their eyes or called names during elementary, and they reported feeling confused or hurt at the time these incidents occurred. One youth reported attending counseling in elementary school at least in part to deal with racism on the part of classmates:

> I think that like when you are younger, you are going to experience more racism than when you are older. Because just based off of other classmates that I've had, they get older and they know, "oh, she's adopted, don't bring it up" or they get smarter about the questions that they ask. Like when I was younger, I went to school and some kid always made fun of me because my eyes are almond shaped and not Caucasian shaped. He would do the fingers and pull his eyes sideways. I'm like "do you got eye problems over there or something?" But, it kind of hurt my feelings, but when I look back on it, it was really minor and it's something that I'm sure he was just trying to do to give me a hard time. He probably didn't even understand what he is referring to. But, you would see a lot more of it when you are younger. The kids don't know how to react to it. (Anne)

All 4 of the participants who had experienced racism reported that this seemed to occur less by the time they were in high school, and they indicated that their experiences of racism now were less hostile or more along the lines of positive stereotype, although they still experienced it. Nora mentioned, “Oh yea, in high school I’ve had, I still have like a lot of like people that like comment on my ethnicity.” Mia said, “Well I think that in my day-to-day life, like I do hear a lot of, kind of just race like—like—um—I wouldn’t really call it racist—people say like joking stuff about race, and I don’t really take it personally.” She continued, “It was kind of- one example people would call me like wonton in class, as a nickname. And it was funny, but it also is just like, that kind of just like separates me from everyone else.”

The participants also indicated they felt empowered to respond to racism, if they decided to, when they encountered it:

> No, I don’t tolerate [racial teasing], I accept it, because it’s okay, like, I understand that everyone gets made fun of. So it doesn’t bug me. It’s just that if it goes on too long or if I tell them, “Your jokes are boring, next joke.” (Nora)

> Well I really think these camps help, because like I said I think it is really important to deal with that you have to be confident enough with yourself. So within you own life if you feel like proud of who you are and stuff then you can take it, and also like just brush it off and or not listen. (Mia)

Discussion

The original hypothesis of this paper was that attending camp would have a direct impact on scores of self-esteem, collective self-esteem, and ethnic identity; however, the data did not support this theory. There may be several reasons for this finding. First, the sample of 23 participants was lower than the 34 cases that were recommended in power analysis; therefore, there is some risk of a type II error. This convenience sample of willing participants does not allow for conclusions about the impact this adoption camp may have on self-esteem, collective self-esteem, or ethnic identity; however, it does suggest that more studies with rigorous experimental design are warranted to gain clarity about whether or not camps similar in design to this study camp have a measurable impact on self-esteem and ethnic identity. Additionally, constructs such as self-esteem, collective identity, and ethnic identity are built as a part of self over time, and while a camp experience may contribute to the development of a healthy adoptive

identity, it may be too short term and not substantive enough on its own to demonstrate any measurable increases in these areas.

Nevertheless, the participants in this camp were overwhelmingly positive about their experience in camp and the beneficial role it played in their day-to-day lives, with the primary positive impact being the role that camp plays in friendship development with other adoptees. Both in the qualitative and the quantitative data, the idea that one could attend camp, feel connected, be understood, and make powerful relationships that they can maintain long after camp is over through the use of technology, was noted. This finding aligns with both theories that were proposed as a lens for understanding these data; that the experience of a shared identity, a collective identity was a strong pull for adoptees who might not otherwise feel as though they always fit in, or if they do fit in, they still remain on the margins. Camps appear to be a good way to develop friendships, and having camps that are designed to promote relationships because they create a feeling of *full* inclusion (not marginal inclusion) with a group of peers. These data are initially reported in the descriptive data, then echoed and further explained in the qualitative narratives and themes.

Another compelling idea offered by the qualitative data is that different kinds of camps at different ages may be helpful. What these adolescents in this study wanted most was to build relationships and feel included; however, this desire may be specific to their developmental stage. While some reported a degree of fatigue or reluctance to attend more traditional, culture-focused adoption camps, some reported that past camps more focused on culture or adoption and racism had been fun too, and some felt these more traditional camps equipped them to address racism or difficult adoption questions more concretely.

A final important conclusion from these data is that adoptees are experiencing racism on a frequent and regular basis, and that this seems to be more challenging for adoptees during grade school years. By the time adoptees are in high school, racism becomes more subtle but is still present in their lives. Indications from the qualitative interviews are that at least for this group of adoptees, they feel empowered to address racism if they choose to, but that there is still the experience of marginalization as a result of racist behaviors.

Additional research into the role friendships with other adoptees plays in decreasing feelings of marginality is a recommendation stemming from the findings of this research. Additionally, more focused study of the design content of adoption camp would help providers decide how best to structure the camps they offer adopted youth is also needed. Finally, additional studies exploring the racism coping skills adoptees have developed, and how they developed them, would be of interest to parents and others who want to support adoptees in dealing with these types of experiences.

References

Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLauglin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articluation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(1), 80–114.

Bagley, C., Bolitho, F., & Bertrand, L. (1997). Norms and construct validity of the Rosenberg self-esteem scale in Canadian high school populations: Implications for counseling. *Canadian Journal of Counselling*, *31*(1), 82–92.

Bergquist, K. L. (2003). Exploring the impact of birth country travel of Korean adoptees. *Journal of Family Social Work, 7*(4), 45–61.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research*, *6*, 1, 97–113.

Creswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cresswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. D. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 11*(3)*,* 255–274.

Hall, J. M., Stevens, P. E., & Meleis, A. I. (1994). Marginalization: A guiding concept for valuing diversity in nursing knowledge development. *Advances in Nursing Science, 16*(4), 23–41.

Huh, N. S., & Reid, W. J. (2000). Intercountry, transracial adoption and ethnic identity: A Korean example. *International Social Work, 43*(1), 75–87.

Kim, G. S., Suyemoto, K. L., & Turner, C. B. (2010). Sense of belonging, sense of exclusion, and racial and ethnic identities in Korean transracial adoptees. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 16*(2), 179–190. doi:10.1037/a0015727

Luhtanen, R., & Crocker, J. (1992). A collective self-esteem scale: Self-evaluation of one's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *18*(3), 302–318.

McGinnis, H., Livingston Smith, S., Ryan, S. D., & Howard, J. A. (2009). *Beyond culture camp: Promoting healthy identity formation in adoption* (Research Report). Retrieved from Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute website: http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research /2009_11_culture_camp.php

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. (2006). Adjustment of international adoptees: Implications for practice and a future research agenda. *Children & Youth Services Review, 28*(4), 384–395. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.04.013

Ponterotto, J., Gretchen, D., Utsey, S., Stracuzzi, T., & Saya, R. (2003). The mulitgroup ethnic identity measure: Pyschometric review and further validity testing. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *63*(3), 502–515.

Randolph, T. H. (2010). The role of heritage camps in identity development among Korean transnational adoptees: A relational dialectics approach. *Adoption Quarterly, 13*(2), 75–99.

Rojewski, J. W. (2005). A typical American family? How adoptive families acknowledge and incorporate Chinese cultural heritage in their lives. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 22*(2), 133–164. doi:10.1007/s10560-005-3415-x

Sinclair, S., Blais, M., Gansler, D., Sandberg, E., Bistis, K., & LoCero, A. (2010). Psychometicr properties of the RSES: Overall and across demographic groups living within the United States. *Evaluation and the Health Profession*, *53*(1),56–80.

Tan, T. X., & Nakkula, M. (2004). White parents' attitudes towards their adopted Chinese daughters' ethnic identity. *Adoption Quarterly, 7*(4), 57–76.

Tajfel, H. (1978). Social categorization, social identity, and social comparison. In H. Tajfel (Ed.), *Differentiation between social groups: Studies in the social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 61–76). London, England: Academic Press.

Tuan, M., & Shiao, J. L. (2011). *Choosing ethnicity, negotiating race: Korean adoptees in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Yoon, D. P. (2004). Intercountry adoption: The importance of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being for Korean-born adopted children. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 13*(2), 71–89. doi:10.1300/J051v13n02_04

CHAPTER 3

WHAT WAS HELPFUL? ADULT TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTEES REFLECT ON ETHNIC-IDENTITY EXPLORATION

Transnational adoption, the process by which parents in one country adopt a child born in another, is a common practice in the United States. The U.S. State Department notes that between the years of 1999 and 2010 families in the U.S. adopted 224,615 children born in other countries (State Department, 2010). Nearly all of these adoptions represent transcultural, transethnic placements with the majority of them being transracial as well (McGinnis, Livingston Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009). Current adoption practice, supported by national and international policy (The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children, 1993) involves teaching transnational adoptive parents about the importance of promoting their children's ethnic identity as it relates to their country of birth. The practice of adoptive parents promoting the ethnic identity of their adopted child translates into large numbers of families seeking out activities such as culture camps, homeland tours, language classes, and ongoing contact with people from their child's birth culture. The purpose of this study was to explore adult adoptees' views regarding which exploration activities were most useful in the development of their ethnic identity.

Transnational adoption has occurred for at least 60 years, with large numbers of children adopted into the U.S. from Republic of Korea, Eastern Europe, China, Guatemala and Ethiopia, as well as other countries (State Department, 2010). Parenting advice for transnational adoptees has changed significantly over the years; initially, parents were advised by adoption professionals to be colorblind in their parenting. This advice led parents to ignore their adoptive child's racial and cultural differences in favor of full assimilation (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2000; Vonk & Massatti, 2008). In the 1960s and 1970s discussions, led by American Indian and African American

groups concerned about the needs of transracial adoptees, began to change the discourse on the needs of adoptees in relation to identity development (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001). The field of adoption social work now actively promotes and advocates for cultural connectedness to, celebration of and acknowledgement of adoptees' birth cultures. A host of activities including adoption camps, culture and language classes, family support groups and homeland tours have developed in response to this change of attitude but questions remain about how useful these activities are from the perspective of adoptees (Bergquist, 2003; Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Huh & Reid, 2000). The goal of this study was to identify what activities, in what frequency and format, are reported as most useful to adoptees to support their sense of ethnic identity and cultural belonging.

Theoretical Framework

Identity is a complex construct. There is overlap where one's personal, racial, ethnic and group identity domains merge to form an overall understanding of "who am I?" and "how do others see me?" (Cokely, 2007; Kim, 2009; Ponterotto & Mallinckrodt, 2007; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007). Most people construct a sense of identity through the blending of these domains; however, transnational adoptees have an arguably different and more complex path to developing a resolved sense of ethnic identity (Baden, 2000; Mohanty & Newill, 2011).

Erickson (1968) was one of the first theorists to describe the process of individual identity formation. Erickson identified the main developmental task of adolescence to be a struggle between identity and role confusion (McGinnis et al., 2009; Ong & Phinney, 2010; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). Erickson felt that the process of identity exploration was crucial to this identity defining process, and felt that the end result of exploration was a settled sense of identity and the ability to engage in intimate adult relationships (Erikson, 1968; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Marcia (1994) operationalized Erikson's identity development model into more concrete stages by conceptualizing the identity defining process along two continua, exploration and commitment. According to Marcia, individuals fall into one of four categories: foreclosure

(settling on an identity without exploration), moratorium (actively engaged in exploration), diffusion (limited exploration and no resolution), and identity achievement (reached through exploration; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). Marcia also believed that the act of exploration was essential to the development of a settled sense of identity. He described a person who had not explored their own identity as being foreclosed, a term that suggests a decision is made before the full process is allowed to occur. Further expanding the understanding of identity development was sociologist Henri Tajfel, who articulated the idea of social identity (Baden, 2000; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004), also sometimes termed collective identity. In this theoretical construct, Tajfel purported that in addition to our own individual sense of identity, people also develop a sense of self through their affiliations and memberships in groups; in essence, our personal identity is tied to the larger world, and to the groups to which we belong to (Baden, 2000; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). The role of group belongingness is critical in understanding the role that ethnic identity plays in a transnational adoptee's life. However, there is some disagreement in the field of ethnic identity research about how to define the term (Cokely, 2007). For the purposes of this study the following definition is used:

> Ethnic Identity can be defined as the subjective sense of ethnic group membership that involves self-labeling, sense of belonging, preference for the group, positive evaluation of the ethnic group, ethnic knowledge, and involvement in ethnic group activities. (Phinney 1996, as cited in Cokely, 2007, p. 225)

Following Marcia's general identity model, Phinney emphasizes the exploration process as crucial to the development of ethnic identity as well as a person's current status of identification (Cokley, 2007; Ong et al., 2010; Phinney, 1988; Phinney, Jacoby, & Silva, 2007).

Phinney's definition and model of ethnic identity development is not without critique, however. Several recent authors and theorists have challenged Phinney's definition of positive ethnic identity development solely on the basis of a person's positive associations with the minority culture with which he or she is identified. Authors and researchers like Baden (2000, 2002) and Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004) have questioned the inherent assumption that a positive ethnic identity is necessarily associated with a minority ethnic identity. Baden, in her 2000 and

2002 articles, offers evidence that a positive sense of ethnic identity, especially in transnational adoptees, may fall along a range of self-perceptions from fully identifying with the ethnicity of their birth to fully identifying with the ethnicity of their adoptive parents. In her 2002 study, Baden concluded that there was very little association between psychological adjustment and identification with birth culture. She goes as far as to conclude that "some of the current training for pre-adoptive transracially adopting parents that suggests both exposure to and competence within the transracial adoptees' culture of origin may be unnecessary" (Baden, 2002 p. 188). Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004) shared some of this criticism:

> Past research on ethnic identity has been conducted under this assumption that an achieved ethnic identity implies a positive identification with the group. In such research, the critical component has centered around one's positive response to one's ethnic group, rather than focusing on the process (e.g., ways in which individuals have explored identity and developed and understanding of how they feel about that group membership. (p. 12)

If a positive or healthy ethnic identity is not necessarily tied to one's identification with the minority group of which he/she is viewed as a member, then the process of promoting a healthy ethnic identity is more complex. For adoptive parents, the questions then become what are they aiming for and how do they get there?

A key point taken from all of these adaptations of Erikson's theory is the important role exploration plays in ethnic identity development. While many theorists can agree exploration is elemental in shaping identity, it remains unclear what a helpful exploration process entails for transnational adoptees. From a very concrete perspective, parents are likely still left wondering what are the right courses of action that will lead their adopted children to a healthy sense of self, one that incorporates positive ethnic identity and a sense of group belonging.

While Erikson's, Marcia's, Tajfel's, and Baden's theories are useful in framing an adoptee's experience as a process, different theories may be useful in understanding adoptee experience when it comes to their sense of belonging. Mohanty (2011) applies marginality theory to her work with transnational adoptees. Marginality theory essentially describes an individual who simultaneously belongs and doesn't belong to two cultures. Choi (2001) defines the experience of cultural marginality as "situations and feelings of passive betweenness when

people exist between two different cultures and do not yet perceive themselves as centrally belonging to either one" (p. 198). This framework is especially useful as a lens to understand the experiences of adoptees, who often have an experience unique from other minorities; they were raised (usually) by White parents fully into White, American culture. They understand the nuances and to a large degree feel comfortable with the rules and expectations of this cultural group. On the other hand, most transnational adoptees, such as the ones interviewed for this study, are of a different race than their parents, and because of this racial difference, adoptees are often assumed to have an ethnic identity that matches their racial appearance. Consequently, most adoptees negotiate this experience of both belonging to two groups, while sometimes feeling as though they don't fully belong to either.

Literature Review

A number of studies suggest at least some ethnic identity-promoting activities are important in the lives of transnational adoptees (Huh & Reid, 2000; Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Vonk & Massatti, 2008; Rojewski, 2005). In 2009, the Evan B. Donaldson Institution on Adoption published a comprehensive report looking specifically at the needs of transnational adoptees (Adoption Institute, 2009). There were several key findings in this report including that while most adult transnational adoptees report an overall moderate to high level of comfort with their race/ethnicity, 34% of the adult respondents remained uncomfortable with their ethnic identity. Another point made in the study is that according to adult adoptees "race/ethnicity is an increasingly significant aspect of identity for those adopted across color and culture" (Adoption Institute, 2009, p .5).

Other research has looked more specifically at different types of interventions. One study found that adoptee participation in cultural activities, along with open parental communication about adoption, were strongly associated with high self-reported ethnic identity, especially when the adoptees experienced racism in school settings (Huh & Reid, 2000). Other studies have found strong, positive correlations between parental support of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being (Yoon, 2004).

In a qualitative study of adult adoptees who had returned to their birth country for a homeland tour, Bergquist (2003) notes that the majority of participants reported having a sense of belonging and acceptance as a result of their travel experience. Other research has found a positive association between "cultural socialization, and self-esteem which was mediated by a feeling of belongingness" (Mohanty, Keokse, & Sales, 2007). In other words, cultural or exploration activities and increased self-esteem are positively correlated, it is the adoptee's sense of belongingness to a group that explains this relationship. The writer is not aware of existing research that compares different strategies for promoting the development of ethnic identity; however, several common strategies are frequently noted in the literature. The Adoption Institute report (2009) notes that "positive racial/ethnic identity development is most effectively facilitated by 'lived' experiences such as travel to native country, attending racially diverse schools, and having role models of their own race/ethnicity" (p. 6). In addition to these lived experiences, research also frequently notes parental encouragement of ethnic identity exploration, attending culture camps, taking language courses, participating in cultural celebrations and through reading materials among other strategies, as successfully used tools, correlated to positive ethnic identity development (Bergquist, 2003; Mohanty & Newhill, 2006; Rojewski, 2005; Tan & Nakkula, 2004; Tuan & Shiao, 2011).

Still other studies suggest that transnational adoptees cycle through a process from denial to emergent cultural consciousness, and that this process becomes more pronounced in the years immediately following the adoptees' move out of their parents' home. This study goes on to note that the post high-school time frame, and the experiences and environments that the adoptees have during this time frame, can be crucial to the development of positive ethnic identity (Meier, 1999). Also of interest is the research conducted by Shiao and Tuan (2008) with transnational adoptees from a variety of age groups. In their work, they found that there were significant differences between the adoptees' ages and their level of exploration. In essence, they report that older adoptees explored their ethnic identity less than younger adoptees. This finding is in line with changing adoption practices, and growing interest in ethnic identity

promotion among the adoption community, as younger adoptees may have had more encouragement and opportunity to explore their ethnic identity than did older adoptees.

While there is general agreement in the literature that these ethnic identity promotion activities lead to positive outcomes for adoptees, there is one recent research study that highlights the complexity in trying to simply follow a list of prescriptive activities. Adams et al. (2005) looked at the attitudes of school-aged Chinese adoptees toward race when considering school diversity. Surprisingly, the study found that adoptees who were in more diverse school districts had lower opinions of Asian-Americans than did those adoptees in schools that were largely made up of White students. The authors hypothesized that this might reflect a confounding of poverty and diversity in their study and speculated that the adoptees, most of whom were of higher socio-economic status (SES), were more likely to affiliate with other children of the same SES status group. In schools with greater diversity, the authors suggested, adoptees are more likely to feel similar to other Whites than to other Asians and to be more rejecting of this difference. In summarizing their study the authors wrote "the results do not support the assumption that diversity at school encourages children adopted from China to associate socially desirable traits with being Chinese" (Adams, Tessler, & Gamache, 2005, p. 25). These contradictory findings indicate that there is much to be learned about the nuances of positive ethnic identity development for adoptees despite the general evidence to support these activities. The research question guiding this study is "what lifetime experiences and activities lead adoptees to feel resolved about their ethnic view of themselves?" This question draws from the frameworks offered by both Erikson and Tajfel, trying to understand the influence different cultural exploration activities, as well as feelings of social membership, have had on adult transnational adoptees' view of their ethnic identity.

Methods

This study used qualitative, in-depth interviews to gather data from adults who were born in other countries and adopted by families in the United States, and took a phenomenologically based approach to the research. Phenomenology is a method that focuses on the lived

experiences of individuals who have shared a similar experience (Creswell, 2007). This method employs in-depth interviews and coding analysis that distills interviews down to the "essence" (Moustakas, 1994) of the experience, where the researcher can develop "clusters of meaning" (Creswell, 2007, p. 61). These meanings are reflected in the findings and identify underlying and shared structures that connect the participants' experiences together, despite individual differences.

The author is an adoptive parent of a child born in China, which has undoubtedly shaped the lens through which the data are both reported and understood. The status as an adoptive parent is helpful and limiting; being an "insider" in the adoptive community (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) has likely allowed better access to adoptive families. One of the first questions adult adoptees asked when contacted was "why are you interested?" Some adoptees expressed caution, indicating that they were aware that not everyone asking questions about transnational adoption was in favor of it, and that there is political thinking both for and against it. Most participants wanted to first understand this writer's "position," before engaging in the interview itself. It is also likely that knowing the interviewer status as an adoptive parent may mean that the participants were reluctant to share more critical thoughts about their experiences; they may have been more positive toward their adoptive parents, or more positive toward transnational adoption overall knowing the author's relationship in the process.

Study Sample

Participants were 10 adult adoptees between the ages of 19 and 34 born in four different countries (see Table 3.1). All participants were raised in small communities in the Northwest United States, although many have lived elsewhere during different points of their life. Participants were recruited using two methods. First, an email was sent out through a regional adoptive family's list-serve, which resulted in 2 participants. The remaining 8 adoptees were recruited through snowball sampling, with the 2 initial adoptees contacting peers and informing them about the research opportunity. Eight of the participants were female and 2 were male; most were in their mid to late 20s. Six were adopted from Korea, 2 were adopted from

Table 3.1. Participant Description

Participant name	Birth country	Age	Traveled to birth country? (# of times)
Ava	Philippines	34	Yes (2x)
Adam	Thailand	30	No
Becca	Korea	26	No
Clare	Korea	22	Yes (1x)
Erin	Korean	28	Yes (2x)
Hayley	Korea	26	Yes (1x)
Kate	Thailand	27	Yes (1x)
McKenzie	China	19	Yes (1x)
Molly	Korea	26	Yes (1x)
Nicholas	Korea	29	No

Note. Pseudonyms were used and some identifying information was changed to protect participants' confidentiality.

Thailand, 1 was adopted from China and 1 from The Philippines. Eight of the participants were adopted by 2 married Caucasian parents. The remaining 2 participants were adopted by a Caucasian father and a same-race mother. The interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed over a 1-year period, with coding and analysis occurring between each interview. By the completion of the final interview, consistent ideas and themes were observed repeatedly throughout the interview, indicating to this author that saturation had occurred within the data.

Each of the adoptees participated in in-depth interviews that were between 45 and 90 minutes in length. Interviews followed a prepared interview guide (see Appendix D) but were flexible in nature. All interviews were digitally recorded, transcribed, and then uploaded into Atlas.ti for coding and analysis. Line-by-line coding was initially conducted, followed by primary (content) coding. Primary coding on the 10 interviews resulted in 33 content codes (see Table 3.2). Some of the codes were edited in process, such as “relationships with others from my birth country”; which started out as “not fitting in with others from my birth country” but was changed to incorporate a broader range of experiences. Adoptee travel was originally “birth country travel” but was subsequently divided into two categories during the coding process, one that was specific to adoptee travel, and one that incorporated adoptive parent travel during the adoption process, or at other times. Codes were also sensitive to the language used by participants; since all were clear that the term “parents” referred to their adoptive parents, this language was used in coding and organization as well.

From these content codes, four broader themes emerged: travel to one’s birth country is a transformative experience; relationships with other adoptees as a normalizing factor in my life; adoptees feel differently about the importance of cultural activities during childhood; and I feel both unique in my personal ethnic identity and have feelings of marginality. These secondary themes encompassed many, but not all, of the initial content codes. For example, Theme 1 (travel to one’s birth country is a central experience) incorporated the following primary codes: adoptee travel, adoption story, cultural identity, racial identity, marginality, relationships with others from my birth country, relationships with other adoptees, parent beliefs and attitudes about adoption, cultural activities, learning/thinking about birth country, thinking about birth parent.

Table 3.2. Primary Content Codes

Adoptee travel
Adoption camp
Adoption is unique and special
Adoption story
Birth country items
Birth country traditional clothing
Closeness with family
Cultural activities
Cultural identity
Different experience than other adoptees
Discrimination
Feeling American
Feeling comfortable
Feelings of abandonment and rejection
Finding story
Glad to be adopted
How I am different
Learning/thinking about birth country
Looking different
Marginality
Normalizing adoption
Not looking like my parents
Other family experiences with adoption
Own parenting experiences
Parent travel
Parents beliefs and attitudes about adoption
Racial identity
Relationships with parents
Relationships with other adoptees
School diversity
Stereotypes
Telling adoption story
Thinking/ connecting with birth family

Some content codes were eventually excluded from this study because they were outside the scope of the guiding research question.

In addition, Theme 2 (relationships with other adoptees are important) included primary codes: adoption camp, cultural identity, cultural activities, racial identity, marginality, parent beliefs and attitudes about adoption, different experience than other adoptees, relationships with other adoptees, looking different, not looking like my parents, school diversity, stereotypes.

Theme 3 (adoptees feel differently about the importance of cultural activities during childhood) incorporated the primary codes adoptee travel, adoption story, cultural activities, birth country traditional items, parents' beliefs and attitudes about adoption, relationships with others from my birth country, racial identity, and cultural identity.

Finally, Theme 4 (I feel both unique in my personal ethnic identity and have feelings of marginality) included the primary codes adoptee travel, cultural activities, cultural identity, looking different than my parents, racial identity, stereotypes, school diversity, normalizing adoption, marginality, and relationships with others from my birth culture. This study was approved through the IRB at the University of Utah.

Findings

Theme 1: Travel to One's Birth Country Is a Transformative Experience

Nine of the 10 adoptees interviewed indicated that they frequently think about visiting their country of birth. The reasons expressed for wanting to return for a visit were generally similar among adoptees: a desire to explore their birth story; to try and locate biological parents; and to have a "lived" experience in country, where they learn about the culture and the day-to-day lives of people. Finally, those who were parents expressed wanting to share a travel experience with their own children in the hopes of expanding their children's connection to their cultural heritage. The adoptee who stated she did not regularly think about birth country travel said she was interested in traveling "everywhere," and noted she was about as interested in birth country exploration as she was in visiting other places.

Of the 10 adoptees, 7 had returned to their birth country for a visit, 2 of whom had visited twice. In one instance, a participant had lived for 6 months in her birth country, teaching English as a foreign language. Of the 3 who had not visited, 2 stated that they hoped to travel back within the next year or 2. Of the 7 who traveled, each had (a) spent some time either in the community of their birth, (b) met with foster parents who cared for them as young children, or (c) visited the orphanage where they first lived. The 7 travelers had visited at different developmental points in their lives: 1 traveled during her grade school years; 1 visited during her middle school years; 4 traveled with their families when they were in late high school; 1 other traveled just after high school with an agency sponsored homeland tour. Of the 2 who returned for a second visit both did so in their late 20s. Each had important memories of their travel trips. When discussing her return visit, Hayley, age 26, who visited Korea with her parents, described one of the most meaningful parts of her trip:

> We went to a family's home, and that is a moment that sticks out. We had dinner with them, like we were just friends but we weren't really, we had just met them. It was nice to see somebody's home, not a hotel. This is what they did, like normal people. Like living in an apartment building and how they ate their meals, and their little boy was like showing us his video games. This is what it maybe would have been like had I not come over, you know, to the United States.

McKenzie, age 19, reflected similar feelings during her trip, noting "it was just really interesting seeing China and just thinking what it would have been like to grow up there." For these 2, envisioning what their lives could have been like had they not been adopted was one of the most lasting memories of their travel experience.

Going Once Is Usually Not Enough

Erin and Ava, both of whom had made return visits to their birth countries, had more complicated feelings about the trips, and reported that their birth country travel helped solidify their identity as Americans more than they imagined. Erin stated that after her first travel trip, she had a somewhat simplified perspective of her birth country; she reacted to this first trip feeling, "This is great! The language is great, the people are great, the food is great. It's all really great, and you don't really get what Korea is about. So that was me. I was like, this is great." For her, moving to Korea in her 20s meant seeing the country in a much more nuanced way. She stated,

"But when you go to Asia, and when you go to Korea, and when you actually understand how the culture and society works, then you are like, Holy cow, I'm an American and that is awesome." Erin further described her complicated feelings, noting that for the first 2 months she lived there, she did everything she could to look and seem as Korean as possible. However, she then began to feel disillusioned, primarily because of the limitations on civil rights in Korea and the low value placed on women in the society. After recognizing that her own personal values were very different from the values of the Koreans she was working with, she reports she began to try to seem as American as possible, not wanting to be subjected to the expectations of Korean culture. She left after 6 months noting that the experience has had surprising consequences; she expected the trip would make her feel more connected to Korea and enhance her Korean identity, when in fact, the experience made her feel more connected to her American identity.

Ava's initial travel experience as a teenager was difficult, a feeling that surprised her: "So the first time I went back, being 19 you know, I was actually thinking I was relatively prepared for it, but I wasn't really prepared for it." Ava's primary purpose for return was to meet and spend time with her birth parents and siblings. She described her arrival and greeting by her birth parents and siblings as, "Just overwhelming, like, on a cultural level, on, you know, emotional level." (Ava)She reported feeling swept into her birth family, but, in not speaking the language, also feeling like a continual outsider. Ten years later, when Ava returned for a second visit, she felt more emotionally prepared; she spent more time with her birth siblings, many of whom now spoke English, and did more tourist activities.

Travel Has Different Benefits and Struggles at Different Periods of Life

For those who had traveled, the timing of the travel and their corresponding development played a role in how they experienced the trip. Clare, who traveled at age 16, noted that the trip was a mix of positive experiences, along with a sense now that she didn't benefit from the experience as much as she should have:

> I don't think I was even really thinking about the fact that we were. . . . it was like a family vacation. It was like we had gone to Mexico. But I remember crying really hard when we met with my foster mom.

When asked if she thinks her birth country travel trip was positive, she noted:

> I think it was positive. I remember there were times on the trip when I was really fascinated by just what we were seeing, and it was so different. I think it was kind of neutral in some ways too, because I don't have a lot of strong memories from it. I don't have a lot of experiences in my life now that remind me of it. (Clare)

Kate, who traveled to her birth country during elementary school, also wondered about the impact of a travel trip earlier in her life:

> I think I was too young to actually grasp going back and everything, but I was also so young when I left that I don't remember too much. So, it was more of an 'Oh, I'm in a foreign country.' We did go back to the orphanage and visit there with some of the nurses who remembered me but I was just so little when I left I don't think it had a huge significance on me. (Kate)

For those who had not traveled to their birth country, plans to do so were prominent in their thinking. Becca noted, "I have always wanted to wait 'til my daughter got older, we could go over together." Although he had not traveled yet, Adam said a return trip was important to him:

> My to-do list would be to visit the woman who took care of me from when I was born until when I left. The head nurse there would need to see her and then to see, just to see where I grew up all those years. And, uh, you know, maybe see a little bit of Thailand. (Adam)

Interestingly, for those who had already traveled, going once or even two times did not lessen an adoptee's desire to return again. Hayley described her own personal "claim" to being Korean as connected to her ability to visit:

> Sometimes I feel like even saying yea, I've been back to Korea five times would make us feel better. I think it would. You know, once is better than nothing, but like, I mean, I can't even say that I know how to cook a bunch of food or like, I don't even have a big Korean friend circle. (Hayley)

Even participants who had more mixed feelings about birth country travel acknowledged their ongoing thoughts about travel to their birth country:

> I don't think it's done (my interest in birth country travel). I wouldn't . . . there are so many places in the world that I would go besides there, but there is a part of me that would want to go back someday, maybe because I just feel badly for not having appreciated it before. Yea, I would go again, but I don't feel, I'm not super-inspired to right now. (Clare)

Erin and Ava, who both described somewhat difficult travel trips at different points, also shared the perspective that return travel continues to be important. Ava would like to travel back and

take her children sometime in the future, while Erin noted, “I do consider myself to have a relationship with the country, and one that I would go back to.”

Searching for Biological Connections Is a Part of Travel

Birth and foster family reconnection was part of the purpose of most of the participants’ birth country travel. Of the adoptees interviewed, many had given thought to searching for these individuals, but their reactions crossed the continuum from eager and ready to search to ambivalent to indifferent. The reasons noted for searching were less about filling some kind of void, and more about satisfying curiosity or understanding something about their own genetics:

> I have one of my friends I grew up with is pursuing trying to find her birth parents. I do have quite a big interest in that, I mean like right now, I kind of have a lot of other things going on, but, I mean, eventually one day, I would like to sit down and spend a good amount of time trying to do that. (Hayley)

> My real desires to meet her (birth mom) are like, you know, how do we look alike and how are our behaviors similar? What are the characteristics that I get from her? Do I feel a void because I haven’t met her? Would I seek her out? Would I do irrational things to meet her? No. (Erin)

> I mean if the opportunity came if someone were to call or email and say “hey, I am your birth mother” I wouldn’t say no to it, you know, but it is definitely not, I don’t need those answers. Honestly, I think only if it fell in my lap. It’s just like, it’s nothing, the process has never entertained me and I am happy with who I am, where I am, you know? (Clare)

> Growing up I didn’t think about my birth parents at all. Now as an adult, I love music and I wonder if they were musicians, famous musicians in Korea or anywhere else for that matter? Actors—yea, just what like, what are some of the things that they have interest in that I have interest in? (Nicholas)

Ava was the 1 study participant who had met her biological family, including birth parents and birth siblings. In her case, the adoption was open throughout her life, and she grew up with knowledge about who and where her birth family was and the circumstances of her adoption. In high school she exchanged an occasional letter with her family, but the initial visit was overwhelming and she wound up shortening her trip by a week because the experience was so uncomfortable. As Ava stated,

> The first time I was actually like with my family, I felt really guilty for leaving. Part of the discomfort was that for them, it was like I never left, so when I got put into that situation they were just suffocating and even though they didn’t talk to me, they were just like, with me, on me, all the time. I just couldn’t handle the emotional feelings I was feeling and so I just need to separate myself. (Ava)

She did return for a second visit almost 10 years later, and noted that this time her trip was more structured with activities, and she was more prepared. At this point, she reported feeling more connected to her birth siblings than to her biological parents.

Theme 2: Relationships With Other Adoptees Are Important

Another idea shared by most participants was the important role relationships with other adoptees had in their lives. For some, this meant being comforted by having adopted siblings, while for others it was having friendships with other transnational adoptees in the community. Five participants grew up with adopted siblings with whom they were close. Six participants had meaningful friendships with other adoptees during childhood, and 8 reported they had important adult relationships with other adoptees (See Table 3.3). Nine of 10 participants reported that their parents made some effort to connect them with other adoptees by attending family adoption camps or by belonging to community groups. For some, these relationships were peripheral, while for others they were core to their experience. The adoptees who had close relationships reported these friendships or sibling relationships were important to their experience that adoption was a normal event, and that being a different race than their parents was not unusual or outside the range of normal experience.

Hayley grew up with a best friend who was also adopted from Korea, a younger sister from Korea, and numerous other adopted friends:

> I think that's what made it so normal for me, like, I mean I definitely had friends that weren't adopted, and I can't ever remember it being, I mean, it was just normal for them because they knew me, but, I mean I think having that around, it was very normal, like it wasn't like, "Oh Hayley's just like that" so, you know. I actually think I grew up with the impression that a lot more people did that (adopted from Korea) then, I don't know how many people out there did but I grew up thinking it was very normal. (Hayley)

Not only did having other adopted peers increase interviewees' sense of normalcy, for some these were relationships that provided a sense of understanding and belonging in ways other connections did not. Adam described the friendships he developed with other adoptees in

Table 3.3. Relationships With Other Adoptees

Participants with adopted siblings	Participants who had friendships with other adoptees in childhood	Participants who had friendships with other adoptees in adulthood
50% (*n* = 5)	60% (*n* = 6)	80% (*n* = 8)

childhood as being very important friendships to this day—there are some things only another adoptee can relate to.

> Sometimes a friend will pick up the phone and call me and say 'I don't relate to these people'. You are supposed to be happy that it's Christmas or the holidays, but, like, you grew up with these people, they're gonna all want to be here. I think, you know, we are always going to appreciate and love our parents for what they did, but there is always a distance because, you know you look at a Christmas photo, and you stand out, and everyone else is the same. So you always have that distance a little bit. Sometimes you feel bad and he (your adopted friend) will say 'nah, you are not the only one.' (Adam)

Some adoptees reported not appreciating the importance of these relationships until they were older, and some, like Erin, didn't really develop close relationships with other transnational adoptees until adulthood. Erin described meeting and connecting with two adoptees in college, and forming fast and intense relationships partly based on this shared experience. Both the sense of normalcy and the unique support these friendships provided were important to most of those interviewed.

Theme 3: Adoptees Feel Differently About the Importance of "Cultural" Activities During Childhood

Participants expressed varying levels of involvement with learning about their birth culture while growing up. One adoptee attended out-of-state adoption camp every summer for approximately 4 years, and was surrounded by Korean items in her home. Others had limited to no exposure to adoption camps, cultural activities, or holiday celebrations. Reactions to the question about whether these activities were important to them growing up were mixed. Some, like Erin, felt they were important:

> I know that there are other adoptees I've talked to that consider camps and *hanbok* and dinners to be materialistic and not counting, but I think that when you are young, that those things count for a lot and that if they are systematic and consistent that they do create a culture and an awareness.

Hayley reported a sense of regret over not having more opportunities to participate in cultural activities:

> I do wish that we had done more like cultural stuff like about Korean heritage or like their culture and stuff, but my parents just didn't for whatever reason, I don't know. I notice now with adoptions that that's more of a requirement now that people fly over there and do more studying and things like that, but I don't know if at that time it was such a big deal.

Still other adoptees felt cultural participation activities weren't important. Adam stated that his family didn't go out of its way to participate or celebrate Thai culture:

> You know, like my parents had some friends who really tried to instill the Asian culture in their house because they had adopted three kids. And I just saw how that turned out, their house, so you know, I'm happy we don't do all those cuckoo things that they do over at their house.

We Wish We Spoke the Language

While they were mixed about the benefits of participating in some cultural activities, participants were more in agreement about their wish to have learned the language of their birth country. None of the adoptees interviewed were fluent in their birth language. Adam, who was adopted at age 5, remembers speaking Thai fluently, but no longer speaks the language. He stated that his parents took him to Thai lessons for the first 8 or 9 months, but remembered being more interested in English than Thai, and after a while his parents stopped taking him. Nicholas grew up with a Korean speaking parent, but did not learn the language. Ava, who was adopted at age 3 and also first learned her birth language, lived with one parent who spoke the language, but was not taught it. The remaining 7 participants had limited language exposure having had only few lessons or learning a couple of words. Many of the young adults indicated they resisted or lacked interest in learning the language when they were younger, but now looking back, they wished their parents had pushed more. This desire was linked to their ability to connect more fully with others who were raised in their birth culture. Many of the adoptees felt limited in their ability to truly connect to people from their birth culture, because of their lack of language. They felt if they were able to speak their birth language it would be easier to join and feel comfortable in immigrant communities, and be more connected to this part of their identity. Table 3.4 illustrates this information.

Theme 4: I Feel Both Unique in My Personal Ethnic Identity and Have Feelings of Marginality

Striking in the reports by most adoptees is the experience of feeling both unique and special because of their adoption, and because of a perception that their parents had to work very

Table 3.4. Feelings About Learning the Language of Their Birth Country

Participant	Thoughts on learning the language
Erin	So I would still love to learn the language. I also feel like it's this really strange place to be in and that if you stay in these groups too long or if you are there in depth, not just like on the skimming of things, if you hang around a Korean community, then you realize, "Well, you know, I can't speak the language, I don't eat the food every day, I don't have family in Korea." Then it's like "Do I really belong?"
McKenzie	I didn't really want to learn a language at that time (while growing up). I still don't know any of it. I took Japanese in high school because they offered that, they didn't offer Chinese.
Hayley	I think that if I'd had the opportunity to learn it, I would have. Yea, I would have tried to, I would have taken that opportunity.
Becca	I guess I kind of feel different, just because of the language thing. Like when I went to the *chusuk*, they were all speaking, a lot of them were speaking Korean and with the pastor and his family, they do the whole service in Korean so it's like, you know, I can't understand. In that way I feel totally different.
Adam	Saturday mornings we'd go off to these Thai lessons to keep my Thai, but it was kind of pointless after 6 months because, you know, they were also trying to get me to learn English and I was more interested in learning English then keeping my Thai up. I definitely wish that I had kept it now. I mean, now it would be awesome.
Nicholas	(My parents) tried on several occasions but Korean is very, very difficult to learn. Um, I think my sister actually took to it better than I did. I just didn't have the patience or interest. Um, but now I wish that mom would have been a little more forthright as far as "You need to learn this because this is going to be important to your future, to your past"

hard to become their parents, while at the same time struggling with feelings of not belonging fully in either of the ethnic identity groups to which they are connected. Seven of the10 participants talked about the pleasure of having access to minority communities, to having a unique story, and of feeling totally comfortable with who they are. Most described themselves as feeling culturally White, using phrases like "I'm a banana," "a White Asian" or "I'm as White as they come" to describe their identity. Yet they simultaneously reported a sense of not quite belonging. Adam described feeling surprised during his 1st year of college when he was asked to join his university's minority group, and was thanked for the cultural diversity he brought to the campus. He remembered thinking "what are you talking about?" He later reported a Chinese friend in college said, "You're definitely not Asian, you grew up without any Asian culture didn't you?" Adam replied, "I know I'm Asian on the outside, but sooooo White." Hayley also talked about her feelings of being not quite Korean:

> But I have been Korean my whole life and I don't have a lot to say about it. You know, I can't be like, "Oh yea, I've tried that food or I speak or I've been there or I don't know when that Korean holiday is, I didn't even know we had Korean thanksgiving." I don't know, things like that. I just kind of wish I could offer it. I feel like maybe people identify me as Korean but I can't really as well because, I don't know that much, or I'm not that knowledgeable. (Hayley)

Becca stated that she liked being adopted growing up, that it gave her a feeling of specialness. She identified herself culturally as a blend of her partner's indigenous culture and the unique culture of her current community. She also noted that when she introduces herself she tells people right away that she is Korean, but adopted, so that people don't have expectations about her culturally. In this way, she is preemptive in dealing with the expectations from others that she have knowledge about or background in Korean culture.

Discussion

The purpose of this article was to identify and clarify the perceived importance of different ethnic identity exploration activities of a group of adult transnational adoptees. To date, most research has focused on clarifying if cultural exposure is happening (Huh & Reid, 2000; Rojewski, 2005; Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Vonk & Massatti, 2008), and if it is important, but few scholars have asked if some of these efforts are more useful than others, from an adoptee's perspective.

This study asked participants to reflect on the value of these exploration activities individually, and share their perceptions about which activities were most important. From this the themes of birth country travel as a transformative experience, relationships with other adoptees as normalizing; different feelings about the importance of cultural activities during childhood, and feeling both unique in their personal ethnic identity as well as having feelings of marginality emerged. These themes reflect a mix of activities that were valued; both long term experiences such as developing deep relationships with other adoptees, and more time-limited experiences such as birth country travel. It is also of interest to note that the participants' sense of the importance of most of these activities had changed greatly over time. In the example of birth country language learning, participants reflected that they often were disinterested or resisted parental attempts to send them to language classes, however in adulthood many wished for this skill or the opportunity to learn. Similarly, participants noted that the initial reasons for their childhood friendships with other adoptees was due to their parents' promotion, rather than their own interest in these friendships; however, in adulthood these relationships took on much more importance to them both historically and currently.

It is important to note that this is a small, qualitative study with adults from one geographical area, and these findings are not meant to be generalizable. As noted earlier, the data from this study are filtered through both the lens of an adoptive parent as the researcher, as well as having likely been censored some as participants understood the researcher's relationship to the topic. Nevertheless, there are several concepts in the findings that may merit further exploration and academic research. First, other studies have identified birth country travel as important to adoptees' ethnic identity development (Adoption Institute, 2009, Bergquist, 2003; Ponte, Wang & Fan, 2010). The findings from the current study bolsters these previous conclusions, expanding further to suggest that many adoptees need to be supported in ongoing and varied travel experiences, not just a single trip. Based on the perceptions of these adoptees, travel becomes more complex and nuanced through repeated experiences and different types of exposure. Furthermore, birth country travel may be important throughout an adoptee's lifetime to promote a continued development of their understanding of their relationship with both their birth

country and the country and culture in which they were raised. As with several of the participants, their first travel experiences may differ from later travel experiences. Adoptees may feel connected to their birth country in some ways, while at the same time feeling more tied to American beliefs and values than they initially imagined they would during travel.

Other studies have explored the frequency and usefulness of cultural activities such as participating in holiday celebrations, reading books and learning about birth culture in other ways. Studies have either been positive or neutral about the importance of these activities (Baden 2000; Huh & Reid, 2000; Mohanty & Newill, 2011; Rojewski, 2005; Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Vonk & Massatti, 2008). No study has delineated which facet of cultural and identity connectedness efforts may be perceived as more important and decrease an adoptee's sense of marginality. The interviews in this study reflect a generally positive or neutral attitude toward "cultural" activities by the adult adoptees, but show a strong wish to have learned the language of their birth country or birth region. The participants in this study saw having the language as a pathway to connecting to their birth culture, if desired, and their lack of language as limiting their ability to do this. More so than a cultural exploration activity, language learning appears to have an impact on marginality, in that adoptees felt as though they would be better able to connect with and fully join their birth culture (if they chose to) if they spoke the language. Interestingly, several of the participants note they resisted language learning in childhood, and had parents who tried to engage them in language classes, but ultimately gave up. Most participants, in retrospect, wished their parents had pushed them harder to do so.

Many writings on transnational adoptees have explored the experience of marginality that many adoptees have; not feeling like they fit fully in either their birth culture or their adoptive culture, but instead occupying a "third space" (Baden, 2002). An interesting link these adoptees made to this experience of marginality is the role that relationships with other adoptees have had in mitigating this experience. All but 1 of the adoptees interviewed reported feeling especially connected to other adoptees, and that these relationships helped them feel their life and their family make-up was more "normal." This finding is supportive of the many and ongoing efforts families make to connect and stay connected with other adoptees.

As adoption practitioners continue to recommend and refer families of transnational adoptees to exploration activities, these findings that prioritized birth country language learning, birth country travel, and on-going relationships with other adoptees may be useful. Additionally, the findings of this study appear to support current international, national and agency based policies that suggest that exploration activities are important to the process of transnational adoptee identity development.

References

Adams, G., Tessler, R., & Gamache, G. (2005). The development of ethnic identity among Chinese adoptees: Paradoxical effects of school diversity. *Adoption Quarterly, 8*(3), 25–46. doi: 10.1300/J145v08n02•02

Baden, A. L. (2002). The psychological adjustment of transracial adoptees: An application of the Cultural-Racial Identity Model. *Journal of Social Distress & the Homeless, 11*(2), 167–191. doi:10.1023/a:1014316018637

Bergquist, K. L. (2003). Exploring the impact of birth country travel of Korean adoptees. *Journal of Family Social Work, 7*(4), 45–61.

Choi, H. (2001). Cultural marginality: A concept analysis with implications for immigrant adolescents. *Issues in Contemporary Pediatric Nursing*, *24*, 193–206.

Cokley, K. (2007). Critical issues in the measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the state of the field. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 224–234. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.224

Huh, N. S., & Reid, W. J. (2000). Intercountry, transracial adoption and ethnic identity: A Korean example. *International Social Work, 43*(1), 75–87.

Kim, P. W. (2009). *Ethnic identity development of Korean, international, transracial adoptees.* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Database. (UMI No.010522)

Marcia, J. E. (1994). The empirical study of ego identity. In H. A. Bosma, T. L. Graafsma, H. D. Grotevant, & D. J. de Levita, D.J. (Eds.), *Identity and development: An interdisciplinary approach* (Sage focus ed., pp. 67–80). Thousand Oaks, CA, US: Sage.

McGinnis, H., Livingston Smith, S., Ryan, S. D., & Howard, J. A. (2009). *Beyond culture camp: Promoting healthy identity formation in adoption* (Research Report). Retrieved from Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute website: http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2009_11_culture_camp.php

Meier, D. I. (1999). Cultural identity and place in adult Korean-American intercountry adoptees. *Adoption Quarterly, 3*(1), 15–48. doi: 10.1300/J145v03n01_03

Mohanty, J., Keokse, G., & Sales, E. (2007). Family cultural socialization, ethnic identity, and self-esteem: Web-based survey of international adult adoptees. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 15*(3–4), 153–172. doi:10.1300/J051v15n03_07

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. (2006). Adjustment of international adoptees: Implications for practice and a future research agenda. *Children & Youth Services Review, 28*(4), 384–395. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.04.013

Mohanty, J., & Newhill, C. (2011). Asian adolescent and young adut adoptees' psychological well being: Examining the mediating role of marginality. *Children & Youth Services Review*, *33*, 1189–1195.

Ong, A. D., Fuller-Rowell, T. E., & Phinney, J. S. (2010). Measurement of ethnic identity: Recurrent and emergent issues. *Identity, 10*(1), 39–49. doi:10.1080/15283481003676226

Phinney, J. S. (1988, June). *The development of ethnic identity in adolescents*. Paper presented at the Utah State University Workshop on Identity Formation: Theoretical and Empirical Issues, Logan, UT).

Phinney, J. S., Jacoby, B., & Silva, C. (2007). Positive intergroup attitudes: The role of ethnic identity. [Article]. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31*(5), 478–490. doi:10.1177/0165025407081466

Ponte, I. C., Wang, L. K., & Fan, S. P.-S. (2010). Returning to China: The experience of adopted Chinese children and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly, 13*(3), 100–124.

Ponterotto, J. G., & Mallinckrodt, B. (2007). Introduction to the special section on racial and ethnic identity in counseling psychology: Conceptual and methodological challenges and proposed solutions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 219–223. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.219

Ponterotto, J. G., & Park-Taylor, J. (2007). Racial and ethnic identity theory, measurement, and research in counseling psychology: Present status and future directions. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 282–294. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.282

Rojewski, J. W. (2005). A typical American family? How adoptive families acknowledge andincorporate Chinese cultural heritage in their lives. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal, 22*(2), 133–164. doi:10.1007/s10560-005-3415-x

Tan, T. X., & Nakkula, M. (2004). White parents' attitudes towards their adopted Chinese daughters' ethnic identity. *Adoption Quarterly, 7*(4), 57–76.

Tuan, M., & Shiao, J. L. (2011). *Choosing ethnicity, negotiating race: Korean adoptees in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yazedjian, A., & Bámaca-Gómez, M. (2004). Developing the ethnic identity scale using Eriksonian and social identity perspectives. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 4*(1), 9–38. doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0401_2

Vonk, M. E., & Massatti, R. R. (2008). Factors related to transracial adoptive parents' levels of cultural competence. *Adoption Quarterly, 11*(3), 204–226.

Yoon, D. P. (2004). Intercountry adoption: The importance of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being for Korean-born adopted children. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 13*(2), 71–89. doi:10.1300/J051v13n02_04

CHAPTER 4

TRANSNATIONAL ADOPTEES AND IDENTITY: THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE FLUENCY, BIRTH COUNTRY TRAVEL, AND ADOPTEE FRIENDSHIPS

Transnational adoption, by which families in one country adopt children from another country, is a common practice (U.S. State Department, 2010). A majority of transnational adoptions are across race as well as culture, and as result the field of adoption practice, along with adoptive parents and adult adoptees, have sought ways to promote ethnic identity development and identity resolution in transnational adoptees.

The concepts of ethnic identity and race are nuanced and interrelated. Quintana (2007) describes race as historically defined by biological characteristics, but also as an evolving term that now includes more socially constructed ideas about race, including perceived differences. Ethnic identity is generally associated with a person's history, language, and customs (Quintana, 2007), but also reflects one's feelings about belonging, sense of group membership, and identification (Cuellar, Nyberg, Maldonado, & Roberts, 1997). With the majority of transnational adoptions occurring from Asia, as well as South and Central America, a significant percentage of transnational adoptions are from both racially and ethnically different backgrounds than their adoptive parents. As a result, many transnational adoptees are racially perceived in one way (by themselves and others), and yet have not be raised in the culture of their birth. Indeed, transnational adoption presents an interesting and unique situation where adoptees have a physical appearance that matches their birth culture, often feel a sense of connection to the country of their birth, but have limited knowledge and experience in functioning within the culture itself (Brocious, 2013b).

Adoption agencies and adoptee groups offer a variety of activities that are designed to promote knowledge and familiarity with adoptees' birth cultures. Activities such as culture classes, birth country language classes, traditional art and dance lessons, birth country travel, and adoption camps are now regularly offered activities for adoptees (McGinnis, Livingston Smith, Ryan, & Howard, 2009; Quiroz, 2011). Informal evidence of these activities can also be found though simple internet searches that identify adoptee travel programs, summer camps, classes and support groups in abundance. Along with the burgeoning industry to support adoptee ethnic identity development, a growing number of researchers are questioning the value of these activities. The Evan B. Donaldson Institute (2009) cautions that some activities in and of themselves, such as adoption camp, may not be consistent enough to provide a significant impact on ethnic identity development. Instead, the Institute recommends that birth country travel and the development of relationships with individuals from the child's birth culture are potentially more meaningful. Quiroz (2012) goes even further, describing many of these activities as "cultural tourism," and challenge the value that many exploration activities families engaged in have:

> [cultural tourism is] the selective appropriation and consumption of renovated cultural symbols, artifacts and events that serve as a source of identity construction for adopted children. A feature of consumer capitalism, cultural tourism in transnational adoption helps shape the contours of culture and racial identity. It also provides a partial understanding of how adopted children often fail to develop hybrid identities and how adult adoptees exist on the margins of two cultures. (p. 527)

The growing critique of some kinds of cultural exploration activities only highlights the need to identify which activities may truly be of value to adoptees, and which activities have little or no impact.

In addition to the many aforementioned organized activities, adoptees and adoptive families have established relationships, both formally and informally, with other adoptees as an essential element for mutual support. Evidence of this is clear through informal internet searches of the terms "international, adoption, and support" that reveal hundreds of Facebook pages, chat groups, list serves and formal organizations that serve to connect adoptees and their families to one another (Evan B. Donaldson Institute, 2012). The research questions guiding this study are

(a) What lifetime experiences and activities lead adoptees to feel resolved in their ethnic view of themselves? and (b) What role do friendships/sibling relationships with other transnational adoptees play in identity resolution? The study author hypothesized that all three studied activities, birth country travel, birth country language learning, and friendships with other adoptees, would have a positive influence on adoptees' ethnic identity resolution.

Theoretical Framework

This study was theoretically guided by the works of Erikson (1968) and Marcia (1966). Erikson believed the main developmental task of adolescence to be a struggle between identity and role confusion, and felt that the process of identity exploration was crucial to this identity-defining process. As a part of this developmental stage, both Erikson and later Marcia felt that the end result of identity exploration was the experience of identity "achievement" where an individual is able to make decisions "on his own terms, even though ultimate choices may be a variation of parental wishes" (Marcia, 1966, p. 552).

Marcia operationalized ego identity development into four separate possible outcomes along two continuums: exploration and commitment. According to Marcia, individuals fell into one of four statuses: (a) *identity foreclosure* (settling on an identity without exploration), (b) *identity moratorium* (actively engaged in exploration), (c) *identity diffusion* (ongoing exploration without any resolution), and (d) *identity achievement* (reached through exploration; Phinney, 1988; Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004).

Marcia (1966), like Erikson, believed that the act of identity exploration is essential to the development of a settled sense of identity. He described a person who had not explored his/her own identity as being foreclosed, a term that suggests a decision is made before the full process is allowed to occur. Marcia also believed that commitment was important, that identity achievement rested not only on one's exploration of the possibilities, but also on his/her eventual commitment to a view of him/herself (Marcia, 1966; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

The constructs of exploration and, to some degree commitment, are important in understanding the current thinking on transnational adoptee identity development. Commitment

is important in that adoptees are most often raised in a culture distinctly different from their birth culture; however, they are racially identified more readily with their birth culture. Questions about commitment to both their adoptive family ethnicity and their birth culture ethnicity are key to identity definition for transnational adoptees. In this study, the primary measure, the Ethinic Identity Scale (EIS), developed by Umaña-Taylor et al.(2004) incorporates subscales that measure exploration, resolution, and commitment (called affirmation in the EIS), following Erikson & Marcia's theories (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Literature Review

The majority of literature looking at ethnic identity exploration activities does not delineate what individual activities adoptees are participating in, making it difficult to parse out which of the activities have been explored (camp, culture classes, homeland tour, etc.) and/or how much families have participated in these events. Additionally, most studies are focused on parental report of involvement, and are collected from families currently raising children, still making choices about what they will or won't do (i.e., a family of an 8-year-old may not yet have had a chance to learn a language fluently and/or traveled to the birth country). However, a few studies do explore some of the key cultural activities individually, including adoptee travel, relationships with other adoptees, and birth country language learning.

Birth Country Travel

Travel is the most frequently studied individual exploration activity. Again, a 2009 report by the Evan B. Donaldson Institute surveyed adult Korean adoptees on this issue. Sixty-two percent of the 179 adoptees surveyed reported they had traveled to their birth country, and of these, 74% felt travel had been helpful in forming their identity. Studies on travel have focused on different aspects of birth country travel including attending an in-country cultural immersion program (Prebin, 2008), adoptive families who have moved to from the United States to live and work in their child's birth country(Heimsoth & Laser, 2008), to the more common 2-week birth country travel trip (Ponte, Wang, & Fan, 2010). Studies appear to generally conclude that birth country travel is a mixed experience for adoptees (Meier, 1999; Ponte, Wang & Fan 2010).

Howell (2009) notes that birth country travel appears to be a more pressing concern for American adoptees, and notes that the Norwegian adoptees she interviewed often expressed little to no interest in visiting their country of birth. The authors of this study hypothesizing that this difference highlights an emphasis in American culture on ethnicity and "roots." Publications about birth country travel are often more descriptive than evaluative (Ponte, Wang, & Fan, 2010; Sands, 2009), and are frequently more focused on the parental perspectives regarding travel, rather than adoptee views. In their 2010 article, Ponte et al. highlighted the discrepancies between parent and child expectations of travel, noting that parents often had a greater investment in learning about their child's history and attempting to locate birth family, while adoptees were more ambivalent about their interest in learning more about their early history and biological roots.

Important Relationships With Other Adoptees

The role long-term relationships with other adoptees (friendships, siblings) have on ethnic identity development is virtually unexplored in the literature (Baden, 2011). Yoon (2004), in a study of Korean born adoptees, found that having a Korean sibling was associated with less distress, and also found that higher collective self-esteem scores were associated with diverse communities. Anecdotal evidence, such as the increasing development of family and adoptee groups and online communities, would suggest that transnational adoptees are seeking out relationships with other adoptees as a means of support. In an unpublished manuscript by this author (Brocious, 2013b), adult transnational adoptees reported that most felt that relationships with other adoptees and birth country travel were important experiences, and most also noted that they wished they had learned the language of their birth country (Brocious, 2013a). A second unpublished study also found that Chinese adoptees attending an adoption camp reported that developing friendships with other adoptees as the most important outcome of camp (Brocious, 2013b). This trend is also noted in a recent policy publication from the Evan B. Donaldson Institute (2012).

Birth Country Language Learning

As previously noted, many studies have included language learning as a part of a larger set of activities being examined (Lee et al 2006; Prebin, 2008; Song & Lee, 2009) but few have teased out the impact of language learning, or level of fluency, for individuals. Manning (2001) observed adopted, school-aged youth attending an agency sponsored Chinese Cultural School where learning Mandarin was a primary activity. Manning noted that the cultural school promoted "a same-race mentor relationship" (p. 26) and she concluded that "when children speak the language of their birth country they are embodying an important element of culture and enacting an important element of cultural identity." A recently developed tool, the Ethnic and Racial Socialization of Transracial Adoptee Scale (ERSTAS) asks specific questions about birth language learning and fluency (Mohanty, 2010), but, as this is a newer measure, there are not yet published data reporting on these specific aspects of cultural socialization. Heritage language learning has been examined in other contexts, and the findings may be relevant to the transnational adoption community. In a qualitative study of nonadopted, mixed heritage individuals, Shin (2009) found "heritage language [HL] may figure importantly into their understanding of who they are. Living at the intersection of two cultures, mixed heritage individuals are frequently subjected to marginalization in their respective heritage communities because of their dual ancestry" (p. 216). In discussing the same population, Shin (2010) goes on to recommend:

> This study emphasizes the importance of providing mixed-heritage children with a voluntary opportunity to participate in heritage-language education that is broad and intensive enough to enable them to fully develop a range of communicative repertoire in the that language. This may involve not only HL learning in institutional settings but also trips to the HL parent's country of origin and sustained associations with HL-speaking peer and social network. (p. 216)

The need to understand more clearly the role of heritage language learning in transnational adoptions and the similarities the adoption community may share with other mixed-heritage communities is an area of needed study.

This study sought to answer the two research questions: (a) What lifetime experiences and activities lead adoptees to feel resolved in their ethnic view of themselves? (b) What role do

friendships/sibling relationships with other transnational adoptees play in identity resolution? It was also hypothesized that that birth country travel, language learning, and adoptee friendships would all have a measurable impact on ethnic identity resolution in adult adoptees. For the purposes of this study, participants were categorized as either having traveled or not traveled, speaking the language of their birth country or not, and whether or not they had friendships with other adoptees in childhood, adulthood, or had adoptee siblings. These categories were independently compared to EIS subscale scores.

Methods

Participants

The sample for this study was solicited from a wide range of sources, including internet based discussion boards for international adoptees, Facebook groups, leaders of adoptee groups who then passed the survey on members, as well as through snowball sampling. Participant surveys were screened in if they indicated they were over age 18, were adopted from a country outside the United States, and were adopted by an American parent or parents. Because of the nature of internet based surveys, the exact sampling frame is unknown; however, 147 individuals clicked on the survey link. Of these 147, 83 completed the survey. From this number, two were excluded because these survey takers were under age 18, and 12 were excluded because they were not adopted by American parents. Analysis was conducted on the remaining 69 completed surveys that met the criteria.

The online survey was posted at the Evaluation Portal Site, an encrypted secure survey site. Recruitment was conducted through extensive internet searches for list serves, regional adoptee groups, Facebook group pages, and online chat groups. Search terms used to locate groups for contact included “international adoptee,” “international,” “adoptee support,” and “adult adoptee.” Over 25 groups, Facebook pages, blogs, list serves and chat rooms were contacted. As each contact site was established, an initial recruitment email or post was sent to the identified group leader, asking that the recruitment letter be posted to all members. Two to four weeks following the initial posting, a second recruitment reminder was sent. This study was approved

through the University of Utah Institutional Review Board, and a drawing was held as a thank you to all participants who took part and chose to enter an email address. All email addresses were separated from the survey data and entering an email was not required.

Measures

The survey included 14 questions regarding place of birth, age of adoption, and experiences with return travel to one's birth country, learning of birth country language, and friendships or sibling relationships with other adoptees. One question specifically asked survey takers to assess their level of birth country language fluency, if they had every studied a birth country language. For definitions, the survey used the scale provided by the United States State Department (see Figure 4.1).

Additionally, the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004) was embedded in the online survey (see Appendix E). The EIS is a 17-item measure designed to establish ethnic identity through the theoretical lenses of Erikson, Marcia and Tajfel (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). To this end, the scale includes subscales that measure identity exploration, identity resolution, and identity affirmation. These subscale scores are of particular interest in this study because of the guiding research question, "Are birth country travel, language learning, or friendships with other adoptees associated with higher rates of identity resolution?" Because it was designed with Erikson and Marcia's theoretical constructs as its base, the scale authors were interested in using the EIS to categorize individuals as identity "resolved/unresolved," "affirmed/un-affirmed," and "explored/not explored" (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004). In the EIS, exploration is defined as "the degree to which individuals have explored their ethnicity" (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004 p. 14), resolution as "the degree to which they have resolved what their ethnic identity means to them" (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004 p. 14), and affirmation as the affect (positive or negative that they associated with that resolution" (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004 p. 14).

Umana-Taylor et al. (2004) report cut-points for their exploration, affirmation and resolution subscales as 19.5, 20.5, and 9.5, respectively. For the purpose of this research, the resolution subscale is of greatest interest given the research questions. Umana-Taylor et al.

Proficiency Code		Speaking Definitions	Reading Definitions
0	**No Practical Proficiency**	No practical speaking proficiency.	No practical reading proficiency.
1	**Elementary Proficiency**	Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements	Able to read some personal and place names, street signs, office and shop designations, numbers and isolated words and phrases
2	**Limited Working Proficiency**	Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements	Able to read simple prose, in a form equivalent to typescript or printing, on subjects within a familiar context
3	**Minimum Professional Proficiency**	Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics	Able to read standard newspaper items addressed to the general reader, routine correspondence, reports, and technical materials in the individual's special field.
4	**Full Professional Proficiency**	Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels pertinent to professional needs.	Able to read all styles and forms of the language pertinent to professional needs.
5	**Native or Bilingual Proficiency**	Equivalent to that of an educated native speaker.	Equivalent to that of an educated native.

Figure 4.1. U.S. State Department Language Fluency Definitions. U.S. Department of State, retrieved on February 9, 2013, http://careers.state.gov/gateway/lang_prof_def.html

(2004) report the internal consistency for the three subscales was moderately high (Alpha coefficients of .89 for exploration, .84 for affirmation, and .89 for resolution). The EIS established construct validity by examining correlations with other well established measures such as the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and the Family Ethnic Socialization Scale, as well as intercorrelations between the three EIS subscales (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Results

Descriptive Findings

In addition to demographic information, this section of the survey asked participants to report on their rates of travel back to their birth countries, their level of language fluency in a birth country language, and to identify if they had important relationships with other adoptees, including relationships in childhood, adulthood, and siblings. The participants in this study were adopted into the United States from a wide range of birth countries. Of the 69 survey takers, 29 were born in Korea, 13 were Chinese-born, 6 were born in India, 7 were born in Colombia, 5 were born in Peru, 3 in Paraguay, 2 from Guatemala, and 1 each born in Thailand, The Philippines, Cambodia and Ethiopia (see Figure 4.2). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 57 years, with a mean age of 29 (*SD* = 9.095). Ten percent (*n* = 7) of the included survey takers were between the ages of 18 and 19. Thirty-three percent (*n* = 22) of participants were aged 20 to 25. Thirty-one percent (*n* = 21) of participants were aged 26 to 35, 20% (*n* = 13) were aged 36 to 45, and the remaining 6% (*n* = 4) were age 46 or older (see Figure 4.3). Four participants indicated they were over age 18 but did not provide their age.

Birth Country Travel

Of the 69 responders, 67 answered the question “have you ever traveled back to your country of birth?” Of these, 57% (*n* = 36) have traveled, while 43% (*n* = 31) have not. Of those who traveled, 15 reported going once, seven reported going twice, and 14 reported traveling to their birth country three or more times. Common reasons listed for travel included to experience the food, language and adoptive history, and to volunteer or study. One participant indicated her return trip was to adopt a child herself.

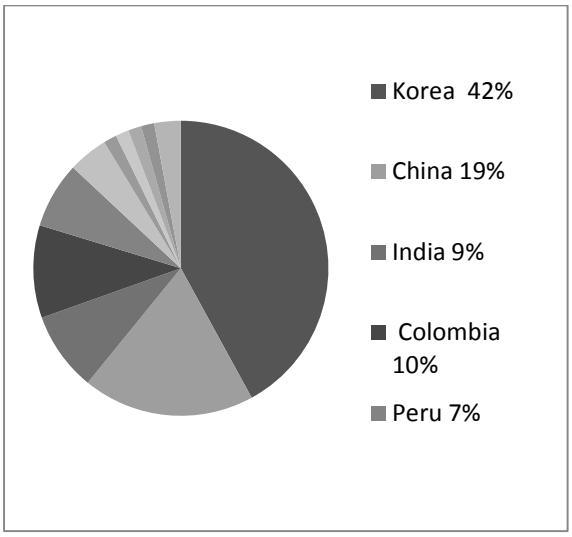

Figure 4.2. Participant Birth Country

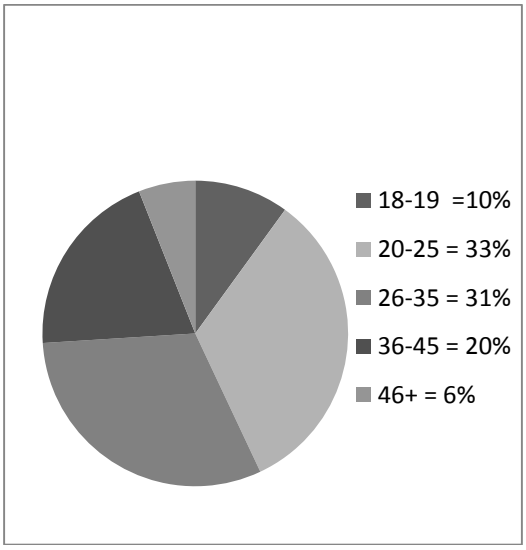

Figure 4.3. Age of Study Participants

Relationships With Other Adoptees

In response to the question, “Throughout your life, would you say that you have had relationships with other international adoptees?” Ninety-six percent (*n* = 66) indicated they had, while only 4% (*n* = 3) stated they had not. Sixty-seven percent (n= 44) stated they had adult friendships, 61% (*n* = 40) indicated they had childhood relationships with other adoptees, and 54% (*n* = 37) indicated they had transnationally adopted siblings (see Figure 4.2 and 4.4).

Birth Country Language Learning

With regard to language learning 64% (*n* = 44) stated they had studied a birth country language at some point. Of the participants who had studied the language, 43% (*n* = 19) indicated no fluency, 20% (*n* = 9) indicated “limited working proficiency”, 18% (*n* = 8) stated they spoke with “elementary proficiency, 14% (*n* = 6) had “general proficiency” and 5% (*n* = 2) were “functionally native” speakers (U.S. State Department, 2013; also, see Figures 4.5 and 4.6).

Data Analysis

An initial correlation analysis was conducted to look at relationships between variables. Cohen’s (1988) guidelines for small, moderate and large effect sizes were used to describe the strength of these relationships A significant, positive and large relationship was found between Resolution Subscale Scores (RSS) and Exploration Subscale Scores (ESS; $R = .634$, $p < .05$). Significant, positive, moderate relationships were found RSS and Affirmation Subscale Scores (AfSS; $R = .278$, $p < .05$), and between ESS and fluency ($R = .469$, $p < .05$). Significant, positive but small relationships were found between ESS and AfSS ($R = .278$, $p < .05$), between birth country travel and ESS, and between and fluency and RSS ($R = .240$, $p < .05$), fluency and birth country travel ($R = .248$, $p < .05$), and fluency and childhood friendships with other adoptees ($R = .234$, $p < .05$) Additionally, a significant, small but negative correlation was found between childhood friendships with other adoptees and age ($R = -.299$, $p < .05$); meaning that younger adoptees were more likely to have had childhood friendships (see Table 4.1).

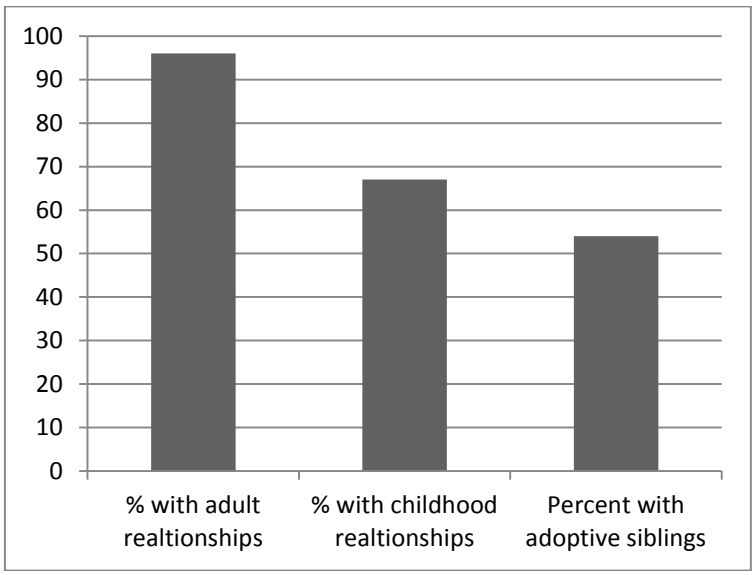

Figure 4.4. Participant Relationships With Other Adoptees

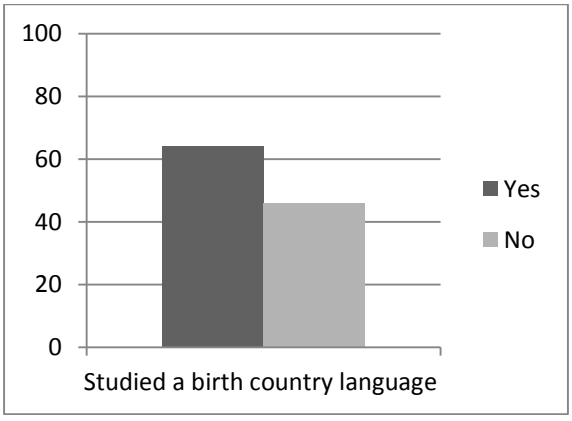

Figure 4.5. Percentage Who Have Studied a Birth Country Language

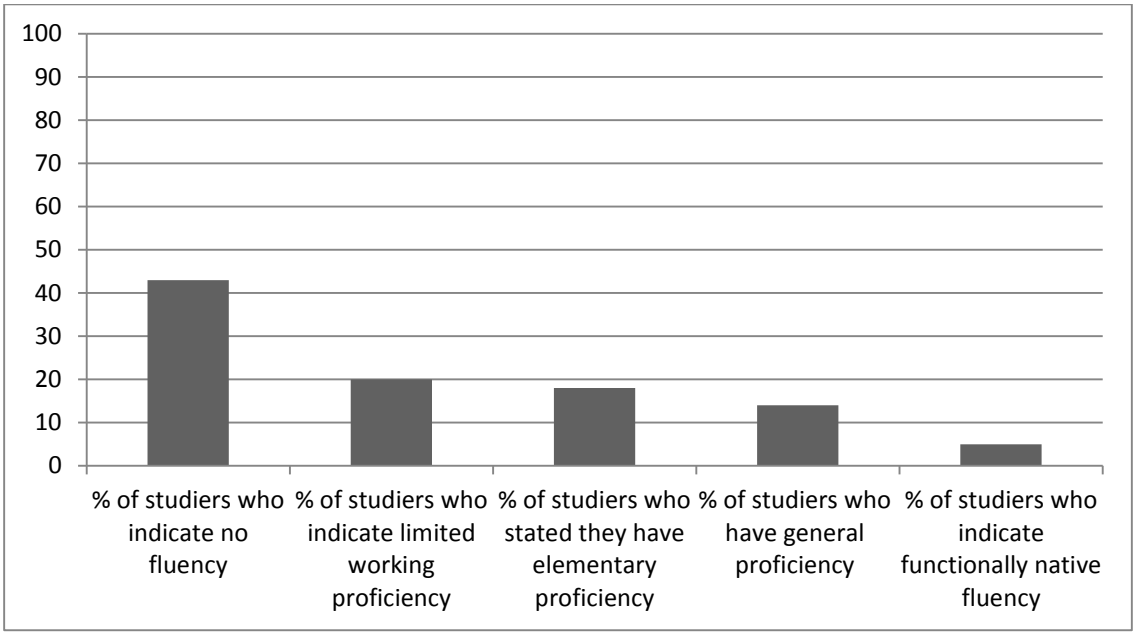

Figure 4.6. Participant Language Fluency

Table 4.1. Correlations

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.EIS Resolution	—							
2. EIS Exploration	.634**	—						
3. EIS Affirmation	.278*	.183	—					
4. Age	.126	−.037	−.097	—				
5. Birth Country Travel	−.051	.284*	.091	.036	—			
6. Childhood Friendships	−.088	.097	.032	−.299*	−.097	—		
7. Adopted Siblings	−.016	−.218	.009	−.036	−.099	.035	—	
8. Fluency	.240*	.469**	.174	.062	−248*	.234*	−.002	—

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The independent variables (IVs) in this study were all designed to be considered dichotomously: birth country travel; language fluency; and relationships with other adoptees. The IV birth country travel was considered as a yes/no question. The IV language fluency was created by categorizing participants into the category of not fluent (participants who never studied plus those who had studied by achieved no level of fluency) or fluent (which included participants who had any level of functional fluency or higher). Data from the three EIS subscales were collected as a continuous variable. However, they were subsequently categorized into dichotomous variables using the cutoff points recommended by Umaña-Taylor et al. (2004). In this way, the subscales could be used to indicate those with a resolved sense of identity, those with an affirmed identity, and those who had explored their ethnic identity.

Chi-square tests for independence were conducted to determine if significant relationships existed between the independent and dependent variables, using the data analysis program SPSS 20. No significant association was found to exist between language fluency and identity resolution (X^2 (1) = 2.12, $p > .05$), or between language fluency and identity affirmation (X^2 (1) = .75, $p > .05$). There were also no significant associations between birth country travel and either identity resolution (X^2 (1), = .013, $p > .05$) or between birth country travel and identity affirmation (X^2 (1) = .000, $p > .05$) . Finally no significant association existed in the data between relationships with adoptees at any age, or as siblings, and either identity resolution or affirmation (see Table 4.2).

While the correlations suggest that there is a relationship between exploration activities, such as fluency and travel, chi-square tests do not show similar results. These different findings may be an indication of the sensitivity of to sample size between the different statistical tests.

To test the theory-based idea that exploration in general impacts an adoptees identity resolution and affirmation, chi-square tests for independence were conducted between the categorized subscales of resolution and exploration, as well between the subscales of affirmation and exploration. Significant associations were identified between the resolution and exploration subscales X^2 (1, $n = 69 = 24.453$, $p < .001$) and a large and positive effect was reported (phi = .63). Affirmation and exploration subscales did not report a statically significant association X^2 (1,

Table 4.2. Chi-Square Results for Relationship Categories and Resolution and Affirmation Subscales

	Childhood relationships (y/n)	Adult relationships (y/n)	Sibling relationships (y/n)
Identity Resolution Subscale, categorized	X^2 (1), = .148, $p > .05$	X^2 (1), = .000, $p > .05$	X^2 (1), = .016, $p > .05$
Identity Affirmation Subscale, categorized	X^2 (1), = .000, $p > .05$	X^2 (1), = .761, $p > .05$	X X^2 (1), = .217, $p > .05$

n = 69 = .139, *p* = .52) within this study sample. Essentially, the strong positive effect between the exploration and resolution subscale indicated that although no association between the individual activities of language learning, travel, or relationships can be identified, the over-arching effort of exploration for transnational adoptees is still highly correlated with a resolved sense of identity. Interestingly, with this adoptive population, exploration was not correlated with affirmation, meaning that while exploration may lead to higher rates of resolution, in this study it did not lead to higher rates of affirmation, or positive association, with their minority identity.

Study Limitations

While the number of participants is well over the indicated number needed for power in the study (G*Power indicated a sample size of 34 as the minimum number needed for power at .80), this study is limited in its generalizability as participants were not randomly selected, and that they were solicited from adoptee groups. This sample bias undoubtedly skews the survey population toward adoptees with greater involvement in adoption related activities, and limits the inclusion of adoptees who have no connection to the adoption support community. Additionally, the survey sample, included only participants who were adopted into the U.S. Further, because of smaller sample size, the data analysis (chi-square) was not able to control for age of participants. Additionally, while the EIS reports relatively high reliability of its subscales, and correlations between the EIS and good construct validity, it is important to note that this is a new scale and has had limited use to date (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).

Discussion

This study sought to explore the existence of relationships between ethnic identity resolution and adult adoptee experiences with birth country travel, relationships with other adoptees, and birth country language learning. This initial research effort was aimed at better identifying what types of exploration activities are most beneficial in the resolution of identity, but this proved to be an elusive question. Individually considered, it appears that there may be a relationship between language fluency and ethnic identity resolution, although this needs more research, as the relationship was indicated in correlation testing but not chi-square analysis.

Taken in combination, however, as they were in the exploration subscale, exploration activities were still strongly and positively associated with identity resolution. The implications of this finding are that for exploration to be of benefit in terms of identity resolution, a wide range of activities is still needed to have an impact. It is interesting to note that while some qualitative and survey research (Brocious, 2013a, 2013b) indicates that these are priority activities, only language learning stood out in these data as individually providing a measurable difference on ethnic identity resolution. Other correlation relationships that are interesting and indicate the need for further research is the correlation between age and childhood friendships, suggesting that there younger adoptees have had increased exposure and contact with other adoptees, at least in childhood.

No statistically significant relationships were found between the affirmation and exploration subscales. This finding is of interest because it suggests that while exploration is associated with ethnic identity resolution, it is not associated with and increased number of adoptees affirming their minority identity when the do resolve. This finding was hypothesized in the primary work of Umana-Taylor et al. (2004), who argued that minority individuals could resolve their sense of identity without necessarily identifying with their minority culture. Baden's (2002) model and findings also suggest that this is a common outcome for transnational adoptees, with many possible paths to identity resolution (i.e., both minority affirmation and affirmation with the culture of their adoptive parents).

Despite the lack of findings in this study to support the individual impact of travel and adoptee relationships directly on identity resolution and affirmation, there is still evidence from the subscores to suggest that exploration as a holistic activity has a positive impact on identity resolution and affirmation. Additionally, the impact of fluency in the language of their birth country does appear to be related to increased resolution. As stated, it may be that activities in combination, rather than standing alone are having the most impact. Future research that continues to be more specific about involvement in different types of exploration activities, using larger sample sizes may identify combinations of activities that have more impact than others.

It is also interesting to note from the descriptive data the surprisingly high rates of adult, transnational adoptees who are fluent in their birth country language, have traveled to their birth country, and who have had and maintain close relationships with other adoptees. It may be that looking at these activities solely as to their connection to ethnic identity resolution and affirmation limits the genuine impact these activities have in adoptee's lives. Qualitative data (Brocious, 2013b) as well as the evidence of strong participation in these activities, point to the important role they play in the lives of many adoptees. Future research is needed directed at what adoptees view as the reasons for birth country travel, birth country language learning and relationships with other adoptees, beyond just the impact they may have on ethnic identity development. Findings from this study suggest a holistic approach to exploration is more strongly associated with ethnic identity resolution may be useful for adoptive parents, and practitioners, encouraging families to be involved in sustained and wide ranging exploration activities across their lives.

References

Ashmore, R. D., Deaux, K., & McLauglin-Volpe, T. (2004). An organizing framework for collective identity: Articulation and significance of multidimensionality. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(1), 80–114.

Baden, A. L., & Steward, R. J. (2000). A framework for use with racially and culturally integrated families: The cultural-racial identity model as applied to transracial adoption. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, *9*(42), 309–337.

Baden, A. L. (2002). The psychological adjustment of transracial adoptees: An application of the cultural-racial identity model. *Journal of Social Distress and Homelessness*, *11*(2), 167–191.

Bergquist, K. L. (2003). Exploring the impact of birth country travel of Korean adoptees. *Journal of Family Social Work, 7*(4), 45–61.

Brocious, H. L. (2013a). *The impact of adoption camp: Adopted Chinese teens and their pre- and postcamp perspectives*. Unpublished manuscript.

Brocoius, H. L. (2013b). *Adult transnational adoptees: Perceptions about the importance of ethnic identity activities*. Unpublished manuscript.

Cokley, K. (2007). Critical issues in the measurement of ethnic and racial identity: A referendum on the state of the field. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 54*(3), 224–234. doi:10.1037/0022-0167.54.3.224

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York, NY: Norton.

Heimsoth, D., & Laser, J. A. (2008). Transracial adoption: Expatriate parents living in China with their adopted Chinese children. *International Social Work*, *51*(5), 651–668.

Howell, S. (2009). Return journeys and the search for roots: Contradictory values concerning identity. In D. Marre & L. Briggs. (Eds), *International adoption global inequalities and the circulation of children* (pp. 256–270). New York: New York University Press.

Hubinette, T. (2004). Adopted Koreans and the development of identity in the “third space.” *Adoption & Fostering, 28*(1), 16–24.

Huh, N. S., & Reid, W. J. (2000). Intercountry, transracial adoption and ethnic identity: A Korean example. *International Social Work, 43*(1), 75–87.

Lee, D., & Quintana, S. (2005). Benefits of cultural exposure and development of Korean perspective-taking ability for transracially adopted Korean children. *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, *11*(2), 130–143.

Lee, R., Grotevant, H. D., Hellerstedt, W. L., & Gunnar, M. (2006). Cultural socialization in families with internationally adopted children. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *20*(4), 571–580.

Lee Shiao, J., & Tuan, M. H. (2008). Korean adoptees and the social context of ethnic exploration. *American Journal of Sociology, 113*(4), 1023–1066.

Manning, L. (2001). International adoption and bi-cultural identity development: A case study of a Chinese cultural school. *The Journal of Intergroup Relations*, *28*(1), 16–30.

Marcia, J. E. (1966). Development and validation of ego identity statuses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 3*(5), 551–558.

McGinnis, H., Livingston Smith, S., Ryan, S. D., & Howard, J. A. (2009). *Beyond culture camp: Promoting healthy identity formation in adoption* (Research Report). Retrieved from Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute website: http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research /2009_11_culture_camp.php

Meier, D. I. (1999). Cultural identity and place in adult Korean-American intercountry adoptees. *Adoption Quarterly, 3*(1), 15–48. doi:10.1300/J145v03n01_03

Mohanty, J. (2010). Development of the ethnic and racial socialization of transracial adoptee scale. *Research on Social Work Practice, 20*(6), 600–610.

Ong, A. D., Fuller-Rowell, T. E., & Phinney, J. S. (2010). Measurement of ethnic identity: Recurrent and emergent Issues. *Identity, 10*(1), 39–49. doi:10.1080/15283481003676226

Paulsen, C., & Merighi, J. R. (2009). Adoption preparedness, cultural engagement, and parental satisfaction in intercountry adoption. *Adoption Quarterly, 12*(1), 1–18. doi:10.1080/10926750902791540

Phinney, J. S., Jacoby, B., & Silva, C. (2007). Positive intergroup attitudes: The role of ethnic identity. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 31*(5), 478–490. doi:10.1177/0165025407081466

Prebin, E. (2008). Three-week re-education to Koreaness. *European Journal of East Asian Studies*, *7*(2), 323–355.

Ponte, I., Wang, L., & Fan, S. (2010). Returning to China: The experience of adopted Chinese children and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly*, *13*, 100–124.

Quiroz, P. A. (2012). Cultural tourism in transnational adoption: “Staged authenticity” and its implications for adopted children. *Journal of Family Issues*, *33*(4), 527–555.

Randolph, T. H., & Holtzman, M. (2010). The role of heritage camps in identity development among Korean transnational adoptees: A relational dialectics approach. *Adoption Quarterly*, *13*, 75–99.

Sands, E. (2009). Visiting the native land. *Clinical Child Psychology*, *14*(4), 537–539.

Shin, S. (2010). "What about me? I'm not like Chinese but I'm not like American": Heritage-language learning and identity of mixed heritage adults. *Journal of Language, Identity and Education*, *9*, 203–219.

Song, S., & Lee, R. M. (2009). The past and present cultural experiences of adopted Korean American adults. *Adoption Quarterly*, *12*, 19–36.

Tan, T. T., & Michael, J. N. (2004). White parents' attitudes towards their adopted Chinese daughters' ethnic identity. *Adoption Quarterly, 7*(4), 57–76. doi:10.1300/J145v07n04_03.

Tuan, M., & Shiao, J. L. (2011). *Choosing ethnicity, negotiating race: Korean adoptees in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Umaña-Taylor, A. J., Yazedjian, A., & Bámaca-Gómez, M. (2004). Developing the ethnic identity scale using Eriksonian and social identity perspectives. *Identity: An International Journal of Theory and Research, 4*(1), 9–38. doi:10.1207/s1532706xid0401_2

U.S. Department of State. (2010). FY 2010 annual report on intercountry adoptions. Washington, DC: Author.

Yoon, D. P. (2004). Intercountry adoption: The importance of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being for Korean-born adopted children. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 13*(2), 71–89. doi:10.1300/J051v13n02_0

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction and Common Themes

The current trend of adoptive families exploring their child's birth country culture is, at least in part, a reaction to a previous era in which parents and practitioners believed it was best to be color-blind and ignore the ethnicity or birth culture of their adopted children (Scroggs & Heitfield, 2001; Vonk & Massatti, 2008). Over time, research, along with the stories and advocacy of adult adoptees, have moved the field of adoption toward practices that incorporate birth country related exploration activities (Tuan, 2008; Tuan & Shiao, 2011). Increasingly since the late 1970s, adoption professionals have encouraged parents to help their adoptive children explore their birth culture.

As noted, the options for cultural exploration, however, can be overwhelming. Should families put their energy into birth country heritage by celebrating holidays? Should parents send their children to culture camp every year? Should they plan return trips to a child's birth country? Should they commit long-term to the study of a birth country language? The research in this dissertation in no way definitively answers these questions, but it does begin to explore some of the nuances of what may be important to adoptees and why.

Looking at the data from all three studies reported in this dissertation, it is compelling to note the frequency with which both adolescent and adult adoptees were engaged in activities exploring their birth culture. Travel to birth countries was common among the study participants in Chapter 2, with almost half making a return travel trip by the time they were teenagers. In Chapter 3, 7 of the 10 adults interviewed had returned to their birth country at some point in their life. In Chapter 4, nearly 60% of the adult adoptees who completed the survey had traveled to

their birth country, and of those, 21% had visited three or more times. All three of the research articles in this dissertation document a high rate of birth country travel in adoptees.

A second interesting and common observation across the three projects is the desire transnational adoptees have to learn their birth country language; far more transnational adoptees are engaged in learning the language of their birth country than was expected or documented in the literature. In Chapter 4, 64% of survey participants had studied their birth language at some point. Of those who had, 37% had some degree of language proficiency. Their language ability ranged from the fluency of an educated native speaker to travel proficiency that allowed these adoptees to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements.

Data from across the three research chapters also indicated transnational adoptees had a high rate of relationships with people who had been adopted from other countries. In Chapter 2, survey participants' primary reason for attending adoption camp was to make friends with other adoptees. Ninety-six percent of attendees made friends at camp and planned to stay in contact with them. All of the participants in Chapter 3 had relationships with adoptees, either in childhood or adulthood, and 96% of the survey takers in Chapter 4 said they have had relationships with other transnational adoptees throughout their lives.

Summary

Chapter 2 of this dissertation examined the potential impact of adoption camp, a common but little evaluated exploration activity. Survey data and qualitative interviews indicated that adoption camp was critical for transnational adoptees in forming relationships with other children who had a similar family history. Many of those interviewed said that they often had little or no contact with other adoptees in their everyday lives and that most of their friends were Caucasian. They reported establishing and maintaining adoptee relationships in their home environment was more limited. As Chapter 2 noted, camp appeared to be a highly positive experience for adoptees in forging friendships and developing positive attitudes toward adoption. When surveyed after camp, nearly all said they (a) made friends with whom they intended to remain in contact and (b) the camp made them feel good about their adoption. Additionally, almost 90% of

campers stated that camp helped them deal with hurtful comments about race. Eighty-eight percent of survey participants said camp made them feel understood by others.

Survey data also indicated that the Internet may have changed the degree to which adoption camp has affected transnational adoptees' lives. No direct comparison of camp impact on adoptees in the pre- and post-Internet age is available. However, one can compare data in Chapter 2 to adoptee responses in a study by Randolph and Holtzman (2010), where participants attended camp before the Internet was widely used. In this study, adoptive parents said adoption camp was a very helpful experience for their children, but the adoptees themselves described camp as enjoyable but too short to have an impact on their lives. The children were connected 1 week a year to others who had similar family backgrounds, but they then returned to a more isolated situation in which they had little or no contact with others who were adopted or had dealt with the same issues of ethnic identity and race. Chapter 2 data, however, indicated that camp in the Internet era launched long-term friendships that adoptees could easily maintain. Adoption camps typically have Facebook pages, making regular contact between adoption camp attendees especially easy.

In Chapter 3, 10 adult adoptees were interviewed in-depth on their experiences with ethnic-identity exploration. They were asked about their involvement in adoption-related activities and their perceived importance. Four major themes emerged from these interviews: travel to one's birth country as a transformative experience; the importance of relationships with other transnational adoptees; the value of learning about one's birth culture during childhood; and a desire to speak their birth language.

Particularly high was an interest in returning to one's birth country. Nine out of the 10 adoptees stated that they frequently think about visiting the country of their birth; 7 had returned to their birth country; and 2 had visited twice. Two of those interviewed stated they hoped to go back to their birth country within the next year.

Travel, for some study participants, brought to light the sometimes complex feelings about their birth country and their own identity. For 1 participant, returning solidified her identity as an American. Another adoptee said that the first trip to her birth country was overwhelming on

an emotional level. When she returned for a second visit, she felt more prepared and spent more time with her birth siblings.

These interviews indicated travel has different benefits depending on the time it occurs in a person's life. For some, especially those who traveled as adolescents, the trip was positive, but they felt these trips had minimal impact on them in general. The second overarching theme that surfaced in these interviews was the considerable value of relationships with other adoptees. Sometimes these relationships were with adopted siblings; sometimes they were with friends met through adoption camps or other community groups. The significance of these relationships, besides providing support and connection, was that they made people feel that adoption was a normal event and that being a different race from their parents was a normal experience. These relationships with other adoptees increased the interviewees' sense of normalcy and fostered a feeling of belonging that other connections did not provide.

Adoptees held mixed views about the third theme, learning about one's birth culture during childhood. They discussed activities their family did to explore or celebrate the traditions of their birth countries. These activities included honoring the Asian New Year, eating foods from their birth countries or decorating their homes with art from these countries. Some adoptees were neutral about these activities, while others, particularly male interviewees, found them meaningless and contrived.

Survey participants held much more consistent attitudes regarding the fourth theme that emerged from the interviews—a strong desire to speak the language of their birth country. Many of those interviewed had had an opportunity to learn the language as a child, but they resisted and eventually their parents gave up. They said that at the time, all they wanted to do was be American and they did not see the importance of learning their birth language. None of those interviewed for Chapter 3 had learned their birth language, including a child who was fluent in it when he was adopted at age 5. Likewise, a child who was adopted by a parent fluent in the birth language never learned it himself.

As adults, these participants regretted not knowing the language. Their desire to speak their birth language was strongly connected to feelings about their ethnic identity. They felt they

belonged to the Caucasian community, but they didn't look like they did. On the other hand, they looked like they belonged to the immigrant community, but in fact they could not communicate with its members. They believed that language would have been a bridge into a community if they wanted to explore it.

In Chapter 4, 69 adoptees participated in a study that examined whether there were statistical connections between engagement in activities that explored birth country culture and a resolution of ethnic identity (feeling settled in one's identity) and ethnic affirmation (whether people identify with their adoptive family's culture or birth culture). Participants were queried about their engagement in language learning, relationships with other adoptees, and travel to birth countries. Sixty-four percent had studied their birth language at some point, and a rather surprising percentage of these had some degree of fluency. Ninety-six percent had relationships with other adoptees at some point in their lives; 61% had childhood relationships with other adoptees and 54% had adopted siblings from other countries, while 67% stated they had adult relationships with other adoptees. Fifty-seven percent had traveled to their birth country.

Chi-square analysis indicated there was no significant relationship between the specific exploration activities studied (birth country travel, relationships with other adoptees, and language learning). Participants were mixed on whether they identified with the majority culture or minority culture and the outcome appeared to be unaffected by how much they explored their birth culture.

Examination of the cultural-exploration subscale and the scale of ethnic-identity resolution, however, showed a very strong correlation between birth culture exploration and resolution of ethnic identity. Those who had explored their birth culture in many activities had a much greater chance of feeling comfortable their ethnic identity.

The finding that exploration, in general (i.e., many activities combined together) affects the level of identity resolution confirms previous findings that exploration is important for adoptees (Yoon, 2004). It is also interesting to note that the lack of significant findings between exploration and resolution would support the work of Baden (2001) suggesting that there are many possible identity outcomes for adoptees, and that identifying with one's birth culture is one of many ways for transnational adoptees to resolve their ethnic identity. According to this statistical analysis,

exploration of birth culture appeared to have a strong and positive effect on achieving resolution and comfort with ethnic identity.

Implications for Future Research

While this dissertation delved into the relationship between birth culture exploration and identity resolution, a topic for future study is how various combinations of exploration activities impact identity resolution. In Chapter 4, survey data indicated that no individual exploration activity—such as birth country travel, language learning, or relationships with other adoptees—affected ethnic identity resolution. Exploration activities as a general category, however, had a major effect on identity resolution. This study examined which activities were most important for adoptees, but a future study with a larger sample size could tease out what combinations of activities are effective.

Another research question that follows from the studies in this dissertation is if the exploration activities noted in as important impact something other than ethnic identity. It's possible that activities such as birth country travel, adoptee relationships, and language learning are affecting aspects of adoptees' lives beyond identity resolution; if so, further research could elucidate what these impacts are, and may be able to explain more clearly why such a high number of transnational adoptees are seeking out these activities. This dissertation highlights how complex a question this really is, because there are so many variations of the ethnic identity activities; birth country travel can be a general tour, an experience at an orphanage, or a variety of other nuanced differences that may influence the impact these activities have. In Chapter 2, the unique structure of the camp, where the participants select and design the agenda, may have influenced the outcome of the pre/post analysis.

Chapter 3 of this study also raised questions about adoptees' resistance to exploration. Several of the participants indicated that at points in their life they were disinterested in or actively resisted birth country exploration activities. Future research could focus on the dynamics of cultural resistance, why children resist, and how parents can respond effectively while continuing to promote exploration, which is known to be beneficial. One aspect of this issue is the interplay

of majority and minority culture, and whether cultural resistance to a minority culture is related to developmental phases. Researchers could collect information about how many transnational adoptees experience this type of resistance, and how families have successfully worked through resistance while still maintaining cultural exploration. Related to this, it was noted in the reflexivity section of Chapter 3 that the participants were particularly sensitized to the politics of adoption, and even if they are only vaguely aware of differing opinions in the research, they sought to understand the researcher's perspective on the matter. This in itself presents an interesting research opportunity; understanding how adoptees perceive and feel about the tensions that exist around adoption politics.

In regard to adoption camps, repeated studies could determine whether camps impact adoptees' ethnic identity. Comparative studies could also examine which camp approaches (adoptee-teen led vs. adoption-professional led; culture focused vs. adoption focused) are most helpful in promoting a positive identity.

Another important topic of future study is the role of social media in adoption. Staying connected with others via the Internet may be particularly important for transnational adoptees, whose daily environment may not include others who share their adoption experience. The Evan B. Donaldson Institute has recognized this area of research in its recent report "Adoption and the Internet." (2012).

The implications of this research should be informative to both adoption practitioners and affirmative to policy makers. First, adoption social workers who are assisting families both pre- and postadoption may find it useful to talk with parents in greater detail about their plans for cultural exploration, and the role that this activity can plan in the healthy resolutions of their child's sense of identity. Simply educating parents about the complex nature of exploration and resolution, and highlighting that not adoptees find resolution by affirming their minority culture is an essential part of parent training. Along these lines, however, adoption professionals should be careful not to inadvertently discourage families from engaging in exploration, and the data would suggest that exploration in general is useful whether or not adoptees affirm their minority identity. Also, practitioners can educate families about the priorities that some adoptees have placed on

travel and relationships with adoptees, and language learning. Despite the lack of quantitative findings to support this, the qualitative evidence from Chapter 3 may be transferable to other adoptions.

From a policy perspective, this research also supports the beneficial nature of key statements in the Hague Treaty and other guiding policies on international adoption that advocate for adoptees' inherent right to maintain a connection to the culture of their birth (The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children, 1993), in that participants across all three studies in some way support the role of exploration.

Conclusion

The research questions that guided this dissertation are deeply personal as well as academically interesting; over the 2.5 years I conducted this research I took my own adopted child to Chinese language class each week. I planned and took my family on a return trip to China where we visited both the country of her birth and the orphanage where she was born. I debated about the merits of hosting Chinese New Year events, and read books on Chinese history and culture. I watched my child carefully for signs of interest or rejection of these activities, and always wondered if what I was doing was the "right" thing. With hundreds of thousands of transnational adoptive families in the United States, I know I am not alone in seeking the answers to these questions, and the findings in this dissertation have highlighted the complexity of the question. Nevertheless, there are both some limited answers and a clearer research agenda to be followed from these findings.

References

Howard, J. A. (2012). *Untangling the Web: The Internet's transformative impact on adoption* (Policy and practice perspective report). Retrieved from Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute website: http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/research/2012_12_UntanglingtheWeb.php

Randolph, T. H., & Holtzman, M. (2010). The role of heritage camps in identity development among Korean transnational adoptees: A relational dialectics approach. *Adoption Quarterly*, *13*, 75–99.

Tuan, M. (2008). Domestic and international transracial adoption: A synopsis of the literature. *Sociology Compass, 2*(6), 1848–1859.

Tuan, M., & Shiao, J. L. (2011). *Choosing ethnicity, negotiating race: Korean adoptees in America*. New York, NY: Russell Sage.

Yoon, D. P. (2004). Intercountry adoption: The importance of ethnic socialization and subjective well-being for Korean-born adopted children. *Journal of Ethnic & Cultural Diversity in Social Work: Innovation in Theory, Research & Practice, 13*(2), 71–89. doi:10.1300/J051v13n02_04

APPENDIX A

ADOPTEEN PRECAMP SURVEY

Adopteen pre-camp survey

1.

Assent information

My Name is Heidi Brocious and I am from the University of Utah's College of Social Work. I would like to ask if you would participate in a research study. A research study is a way to find out new information about something. We are asking you to be in this research study because we want to learn more about how adoption camp may be useful to teens who were adopted from China. We want you to be in this study because you are attending CCAI's Adopteen camp.

If you decide to be in this research study and your parent or guardian agrees, you will be emailed an online survey both before camp and after camp. You will be asked questions about your experiences as an adoptee, your feelings and thoughts, and about the activities you participate in. We will look at your answers from both before and after camp. You will be in the study for approximately 2 months, depending on when you complete your surveys.

There is a chance that during this research study you could feel uncomfortable, sad or upset by the questions that are asked. You can stop taking the survey at any time if you want to.

Only the researchers will be able to see the information about you from this research study. We will not tell anyone else that you are in the study. Your answers will not be shared with your parents or peers.

It is okay to ask questions. If you don't understand something, you can ask me. I want you to ask questions now and anytime you think of them. If you have questions at any point during the survey or after you may email me, Heidi, at u0665931@utah.edu

You do not have to be in this study if you don't want to. Being in this study is up to you. No one will be upset if you don't want to do it. Even if you say yes now, you can change your mind later and not submit the survey. You can take your time to decide. You can talk to your parent or guardian before you decide.

We will also ask your parent or guardian to give their permission for you to be in this study. But even if your parent or guardian says "yes" you can still decide not to be in the research study.

By checking "yes" you agree to be in this study. you can request a printed copy of this form be mailed to me at u0665931@utah.edu.

1. Have you read and understood the above assent to participate?

◯ Yes, I have read and understood it, and agree to participate

2. Date of Birth

Month

Day

Year

3. Initials (first, middle and last name)

First Initial

Middle Initial

Last Initial

Adopteen pre-camp survey

4. What is your gender?

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

5. Have you attended Adopteen camp before?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

6. If yes, how many times?

[ ]

7. What other Chinese cultural related activities do you participate in?

	never	once per year	twice per year	monthly	weekly	daily
Chinese language classes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Chinese culture classes	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Chinese holiday celebrations	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reading or studying about China for school projects	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Other (please specify)

[ ]

8. Have you traveled to China with your family since your adoption?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

9. If yes, how many times have you traveled back to China since your adoption?

- ◯ 1
- ◯ 2
- ◯ 3 or more

10. If you have visited China, what age (or ages) were you at the time of your travel? Check all that apply.

- ☐ 5 or under
- ☐ 6-8 years old
- ☐ 9-10 years old
- ☐ 10-12 years old
- ☐ 13 years or older

Adopteen pre-camp survey

11. In general, do you feel like you fit in with your peer group?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

please explain

12. Describe what you did during your return trip to China:

13. Do you have close friends who are Chinese?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

14. Do your parents have close friends who are Chinese?

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

15. Rank your reasons for attending Adopteen camp. If a choice is not important to you, please leave it blank.

	most important = 1 least important = 8
to have fun	
make new friends	
to spend time with other adopted kids	
to spend time with other Chinese kids	
to learn about China	
I want to talk about thoughts or feelings I have on adoption	
I want to talk about thoughts or feelings I have about my race	
to learn how to deal with racism	

Please describe any other reasons you have for attending camp?

Adopteen pre-camp survey

16. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	◯	◯	◯	◯
In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen pre-camp survey

17. My ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; biological parents are from two different groups

Other (please specify)

18. My father's ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
- ◯ N/A

Other (please specify)

19. My Mother's ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
- ◯ N/A

Other (please specify)

Adopteen pre-camp survey

20. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	◯	◯	◯	◯
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I take a positive attitude toward myself	◯	◯	◯	◯
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I certainly feel useless at times.	◯	◯	◯	◯
At times I think I am no good at all.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen pre-camp survey

21. We are all members of different social groups or social categories. We would like you to consider your race or ethnicity (e.g., African-American, Latino/Latina, Asian, European-American) in responding to the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the scale provided.

	Strongly agree	agree	agree somewhat	neutral	disagree somewhat	disagree	strongly disagree
I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I often regret that I belong to my racial ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my racial ethnic group is considered good by others.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my racial ethnic group has little to do with how I feel about myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel I don't have much to offer my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, I'm glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on average, to be more ineffective than other groups	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am a cooperative participant in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, I feel that my racial ethnic group is not worthwhile.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, others respect my race/ethnicity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I often feel I'm a useless member of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel good about the racial/ethnic group I belong to.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, others think that	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen pre-camp survey

my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.							
In general, belonging to my race/ethnic group is an important part of my self-image.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

22. Is there anything else you would like to say about being adopted from China?

23. Is there anything else you think people should know about supporting kids who have been adopted from China?

APPENDIX B

ADOPTEEN POSTCAMP SURVEY

Adopteen post-camp survey

1.

***1. Date of Birth**

Month

Day

Year

***2. Initials (first, middle and last name)**

First Initial

Middle Initial

Last Initial

***3. What is your gender?**

- ◯ Male
- ◯ Female

***4. Did you attend Adopteen camp in July of 2011?**

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

5. What did you enjoy most at camp this year?

***6. Have you ever had people make mean or hurtful comments to you about being Chinese?**

- ◯ yes
- ◯ no

please explain:

Adopteen post-camp survey

***7. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	n/a
Adopteen camp helped me deal with mean or hurtful comments people may make about my race	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I made friends at camp who I plan to stay in contact with	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attending camp made me feel good about my adoption	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attending camp made me feel understood by others	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attending camp changed how I feel about being adopted	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Attending camp changed how I feel about being Chinese	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

***8. In general, did you feel like you fit in with your peers while at camp?**

◯ yes

◯ no

please explain:

Adopteen post-camp survey

9. Indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have spent time trying to find out more about my ethnic group, such as its history, traditions, and customs.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am active in organizations or social groups that include mostly members of my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a clear sense of my ethnic background and what it means for me.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I think a lot about how my life will be affected by my ethnic group membership.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am happy that I am a member of the group I belong to.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a strong sense of belonging to my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I understand pretty well what my ethnic group membership means to me.	◯	◯	◯	◯
In order to learn more about my ethnic background, I have often talked to other people about my ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I have a lot of pride in my ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I participate in cultural practices of my own group, such as special food, music, or customs.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel a strong attachment towards my own ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel good about my cultural or ethnic background.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen post-camp survey

10. My ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; biological parents are from two different groups

Other (please specify)

11. My father's ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
- ◯ N/A

Other (please specify)

12. My Mother's ethnicity is:

- ◯ Asian or Asian American, including Chinese, Japanese, and others
- ◯ Black or African American
- ◯ Hispanic or Latino, including Mexican American, Central American, and others
- ◯ White, Caucasian, Anglo, European American; not Hispanic
- ◯ American Indian/Native American
- ◯ Mixed; Parents are from two different groups
- ◯ N/A

Other (please specify)

Adopteen post-camp survey

13. Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate if you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	◯	◯	◯	◯
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am able to do things as well as most other people.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I take a positive attitude toward myself	◯	◯	◯	◯
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I wish I could have more respect for myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯
I certainly feel useless at times.	◯	◯	◯	◯
At times I think I am no good at all.	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen post-camp survey

14. We are all members of different social groups or social categories. We would like you to consider your race or ethnicity (e.g., African-American, Latino/Latina, Asian, European-American) in responding to the following statements. There are no right or wrong answers to any of these statements; we are interested in your honest reactions and opinions. Please read each statement carefully, and respond by using the scale provided.

	Strongly agree	agree	agree somewhat	neutral	disagree somewhat	disagree	strongly disagree
I am a worthy member of my race/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I often regret that I belong to my racial ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my racial ethnic group is considered good by others.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, my racial ethnic group has little to do with how I feel about myself.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel I don't have much to offer my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, I'm glad to be a member of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Most people consider my racial/ethnic group, on average, to be more ineffective than other groups	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
The racial/ethnic group I belong to is an important reflection of who I am.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I am a cooperative participant in the activities of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Overall, I feel that my racial ethnic group is not worthwhile.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, others respect my race/ethnicity.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
My race/ethnicity is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I often feel I'm a useless member of my racial/ethnic group.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
I feel good about the racial/ethnic group I belong to.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
In general, others think that	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Adopteen post-camp survey

my racial/ethnic group is unworthy.							
In general, belonging to my race/ethnic group is an important part of my self-image.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

15. Is there anything else you would like to say about Adopteen camp this summer?

16. I would like to ask a small number of people who attended camp some additional questions in a follow up phone interview. Would you be willing to participate in a follow up phone meeting?

◯ yes

◯ no

if yes, please enter your email address so I may contact you directly

17. If you would like to be mailed a $15 iTunes gift card for your participation in this survey, please list your mailing address below:

APPENDIX C

TEEN INTERVIEW GUIDE

Dob:

Initials:

Describe what you did during your week at adopteen camp—activities, etc.

Why did you go to camp?

Was it what you expected?

Have you been to other camps?

If someone were planning a camp for adopted kids, what should they include/not include?

Describe your view of yourself? What aspects of you are most important?

When you think about your adoption, what do you think about?

Have you experienced racism in your life? How did you react? Is this an issue in your life? Were you prepared to deal with it? Your parents? Your school?

What do you think teens/kids need to help them deal with racism?

What do you think is the most important thing parents/teachers/people need to know about the experience of internationally adopted kids?

APPENDIX D

ADOPTEE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Adoptee Interview Guide

Adoption

1. Tell me about your family
2. Tell me your adoption story? What do you know about your adoption?
3. What are your memories about adoption when you were younger? Did your family talk about adoption while you were growing up? What did you talk about?
4. When you think about adoption now, what do you think about?

Exploration

1. Are you interested in/do you think about your birth country? What do you think about your birth country? What do you think about other people from your birth country?
2. What do you know about your birth country?
3. Did you do things while growing up to learn about your birth country?
   Holidays & Dress? Language classes? Culture classes? Hang out with other adoptees? Friendships with those from your birth country? Integrated schools? Culture camps? Travel – have you ever traveled back to your birth country? Would you want to?
4. Did you think these things were useful? Why or why not?
5. What do you remember about participating in these activities? What were your reactions? reactions in the long term?
6. Pictures?
7. Has your interest in your birth culture changed over time? How?

Ethnicity

1. How would you describe your ethnicity?
2. Have you always felt this way?
3. Do you see yourself as (Chinese/Korean etc.)?
4. What does it mean to you that you see yourself as __insert their descriptor_

Resolution

1. Do you currently have friends or people that you are close to that are from your birth country? Why or why not?
2. Where do you think you fit ethnically? Racially?
3. Do you think this perspective will change? If so how might it change? What would cause change?
4. Are you comfortable with your ethnicity? Would you change it? Is there anything that you can think of that would make you more comfortable with who you are?

APPENDIX E

INTERNATIONAL ADOPTION SURVEY

International Adoption Survey

BACKGROUND
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Before you decide it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether you want to volunteer to take part in this study. The purpose of the study is to find out if there is a connection between birth country travel, language fluency, or relationships with other adoptees and ethnic identity development. This research is a part of my PhD research on adoption and ethnic identity, and it is my hope that the findings will assist adoptive parents in knowing how best to support their children.

STUDY PROCEDURE
It will take you approximately 20 minutes to complete this survey, which is available online through the University of Utah College of Social Work, and is a secure website. Questions will be asked about your experiences with international travel, language fluency, relationships with other adoptees, as well as your thoughts and feelings about your ethnic identity.

RISKS
The risks of this study are minimal. You may feel upset thinking about or talking about personal information as it relates to your thoughts and feelings about your ethnic identity or your adoption. These risks are similar to those you experience when discussing personal information with others. If you feel upset from this experience you can tell the researcher, and she will tell you about resources available to help.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The only identifying information collected on this survey will be an email address, and providing this information is optional. Participants have the option to remain anonymous. All data will be stored on a secure server monitored by the University of Utah College of Social Work, and it is password protected. Data may be stored for analysis on other computers, which will also be password protected. No identifying email addresses will be saved on individual computers. Only the primary researcher and faculty advisers at the University of Utah will have access to the survey responses.

PERSON TO CONTACT
If you have questions, complaints or concerns about this study, you can contact Heidi Brocious at 907 321 8382, or vial email at Heidi.brocious@utah.edu. If you feel you have been harmed as a result of participation you may also contact Heidi Brocious at these numbers, between the hours of 8-5 p.m. Alaska time. Institutional Review Board: Contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) if you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant. Also, contact the IRB if you have questions, complaints or concerns which you do not feel you can discuss with the investigator. The University of Utah IRB may be reached by phone at (801) 581-3655 or by e-mail at irb@hsc.utah.edu. Research Participant Advocate: You may also contact the Research Participant Advocate (RPA) by phone at (801) 581-3803 or by email at participant.advocate@hsc.utah.edu.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION
It is up to you to decide whether to take part in this study. Refusal to participate or the decision to withdraw from this research will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. This will not affect your relationship with the investigator.

COSTS AND COMPENSATION TO PARTICIPANTS
There are no costs for participating in the study. Participants will be compensated by offering a drawing for one randomly selected participant to be awarded an iPad 2. Participants will be given the option of entering their email address into the drawing which will occur once all data is collected, but they are not required to enter the drawing. The randomly selected winner will be notified via email.

This authorization lasts until this study is finished.

CONSENT
By completing this survey, I am implying my consent to participate in this study.

What year were you born?

What country were you born in?

How old were you at the time of your adoption? (years, months)

Were you adopted into the United States?

- ○ yes
- ○ no

The U.S. is made up of people of various ethnicities. Ethnicity refers to cultural traditions, beliefs, and behaviors that are passed down through generations. Some examples of the ethnicities that people may identify with are Mexican, Cuban, Nicaraguan, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Jamaican, African American, Haitian, Italian, Irish, and German. In addition, some people may identify with more than one ethnicity. When you are answering the following questions, we'd like you to think about what YOU consider your ethnicity to be.

Please write what you consider to be your ethnicity here:

Ethnic Identity Scale
Please select the answer that best describes you. Select only one answer per statement.

	Doesn't describe me at all	Describes me a little	Describes me well	Describes me very well
My feelings about my ethnicity are mostly negative	○	○	○	○
I have not participated in any activities that would teach me about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I am clear about what my ethnicity means to me	○	○	○	○
I have experienced things that reflect my ethnicity, such as eating food, listening to music, and watching movies	○	○	○	○
I have attended events that have helped me learn more about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I have read books/magazines/newspapers or other materials that have taught me about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○

	Doesn't describe me at all	Describes me a little	Describes me well	Describes me very well
I feel negatively about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I have participated in activities that have exposed me to my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I wish I were of a different ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I am not happy with my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I have learned about my ethnicity by doing things such as reading (books, magazines, newspapers), searching the internet, or keeping up with current events	○	○	○	○
I understand how I feel about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○

	Doesn't describe me at all	Describes me a little	Describes me well	Describes me very well
If I could choose, I would prefer to be of a different ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I know what my ethnicity means to me	○	○	○	○
I have participated in activities that have taught me about my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I dislike my ethnicity	○	○	○	○
I have a clear sense of what my ethnicity means to me	○	○	○	○

Have you ever traveled back to visit your birth country?

○ yes
○ no

If you have traveled to your birth country, how many separate trips have you made throughout your life?

What were the main reason(s) for each of your travel trips to your birth country?

Have you ever studied a language of your birth country?

- ○ yes
- ○ no

If yes, how would you rate your fluency in this language?

- ○ No Proficiency: Unable to function in the spoken language
- ○ Limited Working Proficiency: Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements
- ○ Elementary Proficiency: Able to satisfy minimum courtesy requirements and maintain very simple face-to-face conversations on familiar topics
- ○ General Professional Proficiency: Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in mos...
- ○ Functionally Native Proficiency: Speaking proficiency is functionally equivalent to that of a highly articulate, well-educated native speaker and ...

Throughout your life, would you say that you have had relationships with other international adoptees (friendships, siblings, other) ?

- ○ yes
- ○ no

Would you describe these relationships as:
(Please check all that apply)

Childhood friendships	☐
Adult friendships	☐
Siblings	☐
Other	☐

If other, please describe

Is there anything you would like to add about your relationships with other international adoptees?

Thank you for your time. If you would like to be entered into a drawing for an iPad 2 to thank you for completing the survey, please enter an email address below: